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DICKEY CHAPELLE: A REPORTER AND HER WORK

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Georgette Louise "Dickey" Chapelle was one of a select group of women correspondents who braved physical hardship and danger to ensure that the American public would not be deprived of eyewitness reporting. As a resourceful and dedicated journalist, she set a pace that many of her male colleagues found difficult to match. Her sacrifices were in the highest tradition of her profession. Her story is an important part of the history of reporting.

A biographical study of this nature can never document fully the degree of professionalism achieved by Miss Chapelle. The anecdotes, published materials, lectures, and exchanges of correspondence gleaned from her friends and her work provide only a cursory glimpse into this important aspect of her life. Neither can her impact on her profession or her public be readily ascertained. Only by inference and interpretation can the author establish status, achievement, recognition, and impact. What will be sought is to grasp the flavor of Dickey Chapelle--to describe her texture, what she stood for, what made her what she was; in short, what color she gave the fabric of

her time.*

The biography will be structured in such a way as to touch briefly on Dickey Chapelle's major professional accomplishments and to examine the personal conflicts and controversies affecting her career. The first chapter will provide perspective by describing the setting within which the reporter worked. The aim will be to identify Miss Chapelle's methods and goals, as well as to raise certain questions implicit within the study itself. Here, the treatment will be broad-brushed.

In contrast, the succeeding chapters will have for their objective the sketching of a microcosmic picture of the reporter, including her profile, the identification of certain influences on her life and career, and the evolution of her philosophy. An analysis of her work at close range and a treatment of the special relationship which existed between the reporter and the military will receive special attention. Finally, the need to determine status and to describe the reporter's legacy will constitute the major thrust in the latter part of the study.

In general, the procedure employed will be to blend primary and secondary source data in a mixed biographical approach, combining historical and survey methods with

---

*This approach was modeled after that suggested by John Gunther in his biographical collection: Procession (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. xiv.

certain biographical techniques.

Primary research emphasis will go to the Chapelle papers (her books, articles, lectures, and private correspondence), held at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Private interviews and correspondence with Miss Chapelle's relatives, friends, colleagues, and associates will provide additional information. A questionnaire designed to aid in gaining an insight into Dickey Chapelle's character and personality, and to serve as a means of determining status and impact, will be utilized.*

Finally, because the subject was a widely published author and reporter, her own words seem particularly important in telling her story. In these pages, Dickey Chapelle will be permitted to speak for herself, whenever possible. She would have preferred it that way.

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*See Appendix A.

CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW

This is a study of a reporter and her work. It is also a tale of courage--"that most admirable of human virtues," as John F. Kennedy saw it; "Grace under pressure," in the estimation of Ernest Hemingway. It is an account of professional reporting by a skilled journalist and photographer, one who was involved in crises and issues which affected her readers. She made it her life's work and ambition to inform those readers. In the end she exchanged her life for the story.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once remarked that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of a man." It might be said then that journalism, as any profession, is the sum of the individual shadows of its practitioners. The central problem at hand is to determine how large a shadow Dickey Chapelle cast. The fact that she was a woman foreign correspondent in a specialized branch of reporting reserved chiefly for men is incidental. While her accomplishments became larger in view of this fact, nevertheless she was determined to make her sex irrelevant to her professional performance. Obviously, her womanhood presented certain

obstacles. Some would even say it provided certain advantages. Miss Chapelle felt that it sometimes led to discrimination against her as a reporter.[1] The important consideration is that she refused to permit it to interfere with what is often called the best foreign correspondents' tradition, and the standard for the profession--as she expressed it: ". . . the great correspondents, the Pyles and the Clappers, don't like to say it's raining until they've gotten wet."[2]

Evidence of her sense of purpose and responsibility was forcefully presented early in her career in a letter to the publisher of Seventeen Magazine, for whom she had worked as an associate editor. The tone was friendly but critical and protested the magazine's editorial policy against publishing stories on the Korean War in 1950 for its teenage readership. She wrote:

> It still seems to me that when something requires great effort and understanding to lick it, like VD or delinquency or bigotry or even sexual maladjustment, the people who read magazines have been quick and even proud to turn to their periodicals for information and help. And war isn't so very different from any of these things, as I've seen it; most of those things are kinds of wars in themselves. It's more than that--war is all of these things with panic and personal death and suffering thrown in. But the same mechanics of mobilising /sic/ the reader's head and heart that we used against the other evils, no matter how brief that mobilisation was--aren't they worth trying?[3] (Italics hers.)

As a free lance photo-journalist, Dickey Chapelle went where the stories were "breaking." Starting with

World War II, when she was among the first women to be accredited as a war correspondent, for more than twenty-seven years she covered every major international crisis, revolution, and war that history records, excepting only the Korean War when she and her husband, Tony, himself a well-known photographer, worked as a photographer-reporter team for international relief organizations and the U. S. Technical Corporation Administration (Point Four) for the State Department. This was the period of her apprenticeship when she and Tony delivered on contract more than 10,000 photographs and 600 pages of text reports documenting U. S. technical assistance and development work in Iraq, Iran, and India.[4]

From 1947 through 1953 the Chapelles had worked to "interpret war and want victims and their self-help efforts, to the American people."[5] These assignments took them to twenty-three countries in Europe and Asia and included extended work for the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers). Significantly, the position offered no salary. They were reimbursed for their expenses. But it offered the reporter the valuable opportunity to polish the tools of her trade--the refinement of style and photographic technique.

In addition, her career included short periods during which she worked in public relations, first for an

airline and later as director of public information for the Research Institute of America.

But first and foremost, Dickey Chapelle aspired to become a foreign correspondent and to report on the military. A special reprint of her autobiography in the February 1962 issue of Reader's Digest reveals this fondness for the military man and his exploits:

> This is the story I have been writing, episode by episode, for 20 years: the story of men brave enough to risk their lives in the defense of freedom against tyranny. To me it has always been the most important story in the world. Where, I wonder, will I next have the chance to go on observing it and telling of it?[6]

It was during World War II with the U. S. Marines on Okinawa that she learned her first lesson on how a correspondent should deal with the military. She was there to take pictures of Marine wounded to promote the blood donor program. She complained of her lack of success to veteran photographer Jay Eyerman. Miss Chapelle recounts the conversation as follows:

> "Have you been going around asking these people permission to do things?" asked Eyerman.
>
> I was a short, near-sighted, unarmed woman and they were an inexorable amphibious force in motion. I said, yes.
>
> He asked, "How much blood can a general give?"
>
> Eight pints and he's dead. Same as anybody else.
>
> "How much blood can you raise with pictures?"
>
> Gallons. Rivers, if they're any good.
>
> "Well, don't forget: a photographer is as

important as a general."

> I was willing to try the idea for size . . . It was tremendous. . . . the trick was to word it so you weren't asking permission.[7]

Numerous military information officers have observed the "Chapelle approach" from first hand in all corners of the world, in peace and war.

Probably from her earliest days, puzzled soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines have looked incredulously in her direction and asked the inevitable question: "What's a woman doing here?" The recurring question was appealing enough to become the title of her autobiography published in 1962. Among its many reviews was one from Leatherneck Magazine which suggests an answer. "What's a woman doing here? If you're a Marine, you might try asking Dickey Chapelle. You'll meet her someday. The next time you make a parachute jump, look back over your shoulder. . . . Or, the next time you poke your head out of a foxhole."[8]

The most serious, and in point of fact, the only real conflict resulting in official action between Miss Chapelle and the military in more than a quarter century of working together occurred on her first overseas war zone assignment. She was accredited to the Pacific Fleet representing Fawcett Publications and sought opportunities to promote the blood donor program with her pictures of the wounded during the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Her determination to "do the job" resulted in her going ashore

and remaining on Okinawa in forward positions with the Marines for several days. Her autobiography gives a detailed account of the events which led to her violation of a standing order against female correspondents' presence ashore in combat areas. The result was prompt withdrawal of her accreditation and immediate removal to the United States for the duration.

In defense of her position, she wrote to a Fawcett executive refuting the arguments which she considered discriminatory against female correspondents. In the letter she said:

> . . .The almost classic criticisms which I have heard leveled against the idea of women in combat areas are that they would require unusual transportation; an armed escort of some proportions, thereby weakening the fighting strength of the units they covered and causing a number of persons to risk their lives unnecessarily; and that women would require unusual sleeping arrangements.[9]

Her outline of what transpired on Okinawa during her brief stay countered each of the above objections.

Appeals to Rear Admiral H. B. Miller, the Navy's Chief Public Information Officer, to reinstate her were fruitless. A letter to the Admiral in August 1945 was typical of several exchanges between the two:

> My basis for soliciting your consideration of what I have to say is our mutual aim: we both want to see the American public better informed about the care of the wounded, the value of blood, the nature of Kamikaze attack, the technique of Marine Corps medicine in the field. These are the stories I have, thanks to the cooperation of your staff and of many hundreds of other Naval personnel. Yet no publication cares to consider

them under a by-line which has been officially and ambiguously slurred. . . .[10]

Said Miller:

I sincerely regret that your professional standing has suffered. An excellent time for you to have given this thought would have been at Okinawa prior to the disembarkation following our many talks on the subject of women going ashore. . . .[11]

It was not until October 1955 that she regained accreditation. The occasion was a chance to write on speculation an article on Marine recruit training. The location was the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at San Diego. The Commanding Officer--Major General John MacQueen, an old friend from Okinawa--welcomed her back and invited her to cover boot training.[12]

On that occasion, San Diego Evening Tribune reporter Eugenie Sedlock described the correspondent in a "woman reporter to woman reporter" interview:

Dickey Chapelle is a tiny woman with a voice like a drill instructor's bark. She's in love with the Marines. It began 10 years ago on Okinawa where she was the first woman correspondent to live at the front with the heroic 6th Marine Division. In a dominant male world of military stiffness, discipline, regulations, she's subordinated femininity. She wears a loose khaki shirt and culottes and high-laced, mannish boots. She draws back her hair in a knot, perches big horn-rimmed spectacles (which she admits she needs) on her nose. No red lacquered nails, no showily roughed lips. An incessant smoker, her fingers are stained with nicotine. She talks in a rapid, staccatto way, and her hands and face are browned from long outdoor hours of recruit observance. Tough assignment? "No," exclaimed Dickey. "It is a sentimental journey."[13]

This was a crucial time for the struggling reporter. She was desperately trying to make a place for herself in

journalism. Her need for recognition and sense of achievement had led to the break-up of her marriage after fifteen years. She was aware that the Marines expected something in return for the cooperation they offered. It was her first real experience with the give and take of media-military relations. In a letter to Tony (they remained close friends throughout her lifetime) she outlined the situation as she saw it:

> The truth of course is probably that these nice people are flattering me into being so busy I just don't know my own mind. Their flattery is a very powerful psychological trick, of course, dangerous as hell, and the only reason I forgive 'em is because they play it on themselves all the time. And that I fall for it--in other words, I think I can be a correspondent who can help them because they are so sure of it--there is no question. But it's good for me right now to feel a little confidence; that long stint of professional discouragement after the Point Four career just didn't turn into careering--that was bad for both of us.[14]

The Marine story did not sell at the time. Commenting on the episode in the autobiography, she admitted:

> To this day, I am not sure what I was able to do for the Corps with the reports and photographs I made then. But they taught me bone-deep the difference between a war correspondent and a girl reporter, even one willing to say she wanted to go forward because the remark rings like a bell.[15]

Financial considerations forced her to look in another direction for a career, and she chose public relations. On March 14, 1956, a release from the Research Institute of America announced her appointment as Public

Information Director. A few weeks later she explained the nature of her new duties in a letter to her parents. The Institute was about to issue its annual report on the "stratagems of Communist Russia" and she mentioned her responsibility for handling newspaper queries which might result.[16]

Miss Chapelle stayed with the Institute only until the next international crisis attracted her. It happened to be the Hungarian Revolt in November 1956. She took a leave of absence and accepted a free lance assignment for Life Magazine. Her poignant pictures of fleeing refugees appeared in Life. In addition, she was heroically described by James Michener in his best seller, The Bridge at Andau, as a refugee guide who helped large numbers of Hungarians to safety. She had been seized by the communists inside Hungary on December 4 and imprisoned for fifty-two days in Budapest. In his book, Michener did not identify her by name. In fact, because she was in prison as he wrote, and he feared the book could be used as evidence against her, he deliberately disguised her identity by referring to her as a male.

The Milwaukee Journal gave this account of that incident:

> It was at this time, Michener wrote, that I met a brave and daring photographer whose pictures helped tell the story of Hungary's mass flight to freedom. He would go anywhere, and for the next several nights we patrolled the border together, bringing in hundreds of Hungarians.[17]

The experience undoubtedly reinforced her determination to become a top journalist. It did more than that--it gave her prominence and status. She revealed her newly formed plans in a letter to her old and dear friend of the "Quaker Days," John Kavanaugh. The letter, written on March 10, 1957, said in part:

> Now that I'm truly back and able to see my experience in a little clearer perspective, I find I've brought something very good back with me . . . I have a real compulsion to both write about and study the kind of government that held me--government-by-terror, of course, but also a kind of government that just now is ruling more people than any other one form.[18]

From this point on, her career took on the proportions of a crusade against communism. Typical of her writing on the subject was this article which appeared in the Long Island Daily Press:

> The revolt in Budapest failed by a thin edge. Many refugees among us know how very little support from outside might have changed the bloody outcome. . . . Their aim now is to get ready for the next crack in the Iron Curtain. That "one more chance" conceivably could see the end of Red terror in our time--if we respond effectively.[19]

The anti-communist theme dominated much of what she wrote and on occasion colored her reporting. In later years she admitted her inability to maintain objectivity when covering Cuba and Vietnam.[20]

Her vendetta against communism is nowhere as apparent as in a collection of her stories published in Coronet in February 1961. One, entitled "Quemoy: A China Missionary's Last Stand," illustrates her deep feeling of

hatred toward the system:

> When I revisited the bearded French priest /Father Druetta/ in October 1959, I asked him why he refused to leave the island. Aware that I had been imprisoned by the Reds, he responded with a question: "How did you feel about the Communists when they released you?" I told him, I intend to spend my life making them sorry they let me go.

The years after the Hungarian episode were filled with exciting and dangerous assignments which took Miss Chapelle to the "bayonet borders" of the world. The December 1957 issue of Reader's Digest published her account of Christmas in a Hungarian prison. The Digest awarded the piece its special prize which carried with it a $2,500 "First Person" award. The story, entitled "Nobody Owes Me a Christmas," was described by Kathleen McLaughlin, long-time New York Times writer and admirer of the correspondent, as a "classic piece," the product of a "terrific writer."[21]

In rapid succession, she went underground to report on the Algerian revolution in 1957 and then spent the summer of 1958 with the U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. The opportunity to observe the famed fighting men from Turkey arose then, and she took full advantage of it. Then came Lebanon and again she was with her Marines. Cuba in 1958-1959 particularly suited her style of reporting, and she became an admirer of Castro and a supporter of his revolution. He called her the "polite little American with all the tiger blood in her veins."[22] Their mutual

admiration proved short-lived. A follow-up piece for Reader's Digest, "Cuba: One Year Later," took the bearded revolutionary to task.[23]

In the latter part of 1959, Miss Chapelle traveled to the Pacific for the first time since World War II. Her objective was the Seventh Fleet but she managed to parachute with Special Forces units training on Okinawa, and spent some time in Korea and with Republic of China troops on Taiwan. By this time, publishers' acceptances began to outnumber rejection slips. She had published stories over the years in many well-known American magazines and occasionally in national prestige publications like National Geographic and Reader's Digest. Her photographs had appeared in Look and Life magazines. She had sold pieces to syndicates and individual newspapers. But she was still not an established correspondent. Financially, she was far from secure, and she went to the lecture circuit and established a routine which she followed until her death. "I try to story tell through words rather than writing for two months a year," she said of her speaking engagements. "The other 10 months I do research overseas."[24]

And to a friend she wrote:

> As far as I can figure, I am now a traveling salesman for Freedom of the Press . . . and one good thing about that selling job of mine: I believe in the product. The mental process behind this is known as

"Buying your own publicity," probably the most dangerous sin known to mankind.[25]

A devotee of physical fitness, she worried over the softness of American youth and frequently ridiculed them in comparison with the dedicated followers of communism who welcome physical hardship. At this point in her professional career she began research on a book dealing with military training. She took the idea to a publisher and as she later told a paratrooper friend:

> I "sold" the book contracts by a parlor trick that should amuse you. To point out the Army's present depressed physical fitness standards, I scored 223 myself, performing push-ups, squat jumps, sit-ups and squat thrusts actually in the editor's office.[26] /She was 42 years old at the time./

Dickey Chapelle was preoccupied with what she felt was a disruptive influence affecting the strength of will of the American people. In her lectures she frequently challenged her audiences to take action. After her visits to Laos and Vietnam in 1961-1962, she was even more convinced of the need for a determined effort in Southeast Asia:

> I'm needling you /she told her audiences/. I've watched defeats of the free world in eight countries. . . . a few more American military leaders in Southeast Asia could turn the Communist advance. War is only a test of will. If we show our allies we have the will to fight, the war against communism will be won.[27]

In this connection, she wrote the Director of the Hudson Institute, then involved in researching problems of national security and international order, stating:

> . . . the U. S. Army everywhere is terrifyingly weakened by its women, who in turn are backed by the femininity of the acceptable public attitudes. But--I've just spent 38 days in the field in Laos with Special Forces men. . . . They were terrific and obviously had managed to walk out beyond the cloying influence of bridge-table and bedroom.[28]

In February 1962, 10,000 copies of her autobiography went on sale. The book received excellent treatment at the hands of all reviewers. Charles Poore of the New York Times, Quentin Reynolds for the Saturday Review, and several others praised the style, wit, and the skill of its author. All recommended it to their readers.* In addition, a condensed version was included in the fortieth anniversary issue of the Reader's Digest.

For Dickey Chapelle, 1962 proved to be a very good year. The Overseas Press Club presented her its highest accolade--The George Polk Memorial Award--for her reports on fighting in South Vietnam. Her good fortune continued into 1963, when she won first prize in the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)--World Book Pictures of the Year Contest.

She had acquired the credentials of a war correspondent. The Santo Domingo crisis in the summer of 1965 added to her laurels and led to a close affiliation with

---

*Despite its good reviews, the book sold only moderately well. Tony Chapelle indicated in an interview with the author on April 19, 1958, that he felt the Morrow Company had failed to publicize it sufficiently and a more aggressive company would have promoted higher sales.

the National Observer, for which she worked when killed in Vietnam in November that same year.

In addition, she attained a measure of prestige by virtue of controversy. A 1962 spring issue of the New Republic carried an article which mentioned her appearance on the Jack Paar television show* and by inference, accused her of "war mongering." Her reaction:

> I see no reason why the magazine /New Republic/ shouldn't call me a war monger. I am mongering--i.e., selling--a war, even one on foreign shores. I believe there is a shooting war in Vietnam which the U. S. should fight and win. I do not believe the most effective way to win is to commit U. S. ground troops but to employ the military adviser-diplomatic mechanic to the greatest effectiveness so that the very good Vietnamese fighting men are deployed and led to the greatest effectiveness (i.e., can kill the greatest number of Viet Cong terrorists).[29]

With subsequent trips to Vietnam in 1964 and 1965, her attitude was to change very little except to become perhaps more "hawkish."

---

*Jack Paar was a well-known radio and television personality whose nightly television program, "The Tonight Show," was nationally televised over the National Broadcasting Company's network. By 1962 it had achieved the top rating among programs of its type. It used a combination variety show and personality interview format. Paar had achieved a reputation for speaking out on national issues and for inviting well-known personalities from all the professions as his television guests to discuss these issues. The New Republic mentioned his program where Dickey Chapelle discussed the indecision Americans were displaying over what they wanted in Asia; and described South Vietnam as "our last piece of real estate on the Asian continent." Paar challenged the statement and replied to the effect that Vietnam was a sovereign nation and not U. S. real estate. (See New Republic Magazine, "TV Under Paar," March 5, 1962, pp. 6 and 8.)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1]Captain R. Brett, USN, interview with author at the Pentagon, Washington, D. C., April 23, 1968.

[2]Unpublished draft copy of autobiography: "The Trouble I've Asked For," July 25, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, Series 5. (Hereafter cited as the Chapelle Papers.)

[3]Letter to Alice Thompson, Seventeen Magazine, July 21, 1950, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[4]Letter to the Chairman, United Nations Technical Assistance Board, September 26, 1953, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[5]Ibid.

[6]"What's a Woman Doing Here?" A Reader's Digest Book Section (Pleasantville, N. Y.: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1962), p. 29.

[7]Dickey Chapelle, What's a Woman Doing Here? (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962), pp. 106-108.

[8]Leatherneck Magazine, April 5, 1962.

[9]Letter to Mr. C. Williams, Fawcett Publications, May 4, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[10]Letter to Rear Admiral H. B. Miller, USN (Ret.), August 7, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[11]Letter to Dickey Chapelle, August 11, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[12]Chapelle, What's a Woman Doing Here?, p. 141.

[13]San Diego (Calif.) Evening Tribune, October 17, 1955.

[14]Letter to Tony Chapelle, November 2, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[15]Chapelle, *What's a Woman Doing Here?*, p. 141.

[16]Letter to family, March 25, 1956, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[17]Milwaukee (Wis.) *Journal*, March 5, 1957.

[18]Letter to John Kavanaugh, March 10, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[19]Long Island (N. Y.) *Daily Press*, July 2, 1957.

[20]Chickasha (Okla.) *Daily Oklahoman*, February 11, 1964.

[21]Kathleen McLaughlin interview with the author in New York City, April 23, 1968.

[22]From an interview with Castro in 1959 in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[23]The *Reader's Digest*, March 1960, p. 74.

[24]Oklahoma City (Okla.) *Times*, February 10, 1964.

[25]Letter to her secretary, March 22, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[26]Letter to friend in the 101st Airborne Division, August 4, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[27]St. Paul (Minn.) *Daily*, April 6, 1962.

[28]Letter to C. Williams, April 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[29]*Ibid*.

CHAPTER II

A PROFILE IN COURAGE

Dickey Chapelle could be feminine or unfeminine, tough or tender, demanding or discreet. Indications are that she was a complex person but an uncomplicated personality. Some thought her contrary but few called her controversial. She could sprinkle her conversation generously with four-letter words or use the most refined language. She wore Marine fatigues or an elegant lounging outfit with similar ease. While in the field, her wrist watch was buckled on with a plain, inexpensive strap; while her dress watch, worn on other occasions, was an Omega with a solid gold band. Her footwear on assignment was a pair of serviceable field boots, carefully square-knotted; but when the event was social, she wore delicate high heels. Depending on the situation, she could flash the Swiss army hunting knife she always carried in the field, or a beaded black purse, with equal flair. Even though she had parachuted into combat, been dive-bombed, strafed, napalmed, and sniped at, she was apprehensive about driving an automobile and frightened to light a simple gas stove burner. In many ways, Dickey Chapelle was a study in contrasts.

A colleague once described her as a "no nonsense" reporter. Perhaps the description was applicable to her personality as well.

An Individualist From the Beginning

As a young girl growing up in the Shorewood section of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she showed a disdain for teenage frills. Her boots and corduroy trousers revealed a touch of the individualist even then. But she managed to retain her femininity in other ways. She talked loud and fast, and displayed an early and unusual interest in people. Her fascination for adventure and adventurers led "Dickey" to adopt her nickname from the great Arctic explorer Admiral Richard E. Byrd, whose exploits were the talk of the 1930's.[1]

The Family Influence

She may have been somewhat overprotected by today's standards. Her parents would not even permit her to go to downtown Milwaukee alone until she was 15.[2] Their opposition to violence, especially to war, made Dickey Chapelle's ultimate choice of a career as a war correspondent even more astonishing. In fact, nothing in her early training, education, or family philosophy led those close to her to anticipate her decision. Perhaps the only clues were her penchant for writing things down, and her natural ability to string words together. She would often stay

awake far into the night, seated next to the window in her room, writing a fine long-hand on rolls of bathroom paper, by the street light.[3] She was fond of arguing and found causes and struggling groups irresistible. The pattern revealed in these tendencies evolved into life-long habits.

Generally, her parents, Paul and Edna Meyer, ruled by reason. This was probably wise because their daughter was more inclined to respond to persuasion than to edict. The Meyer family was a close one. She and her younger brother, Bob, were devoted to their parents and two aunts, Georgette and Louise. They lived comfortably on the elder Meyer's salary as a sales engineer and from the additional income of Mrs. Meyer's teaching job.

The Influence of a Friend

It was no surprise when Miss Chapelle was graduated from Shorewood High School with honors as the class valedictorian. However, the shock came later when she decided to enroll at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) to study aeronautical engineering. A scholarship eased the tension at home, but there were other indications in her formative years that she would be expected to do whatever presented the most challenge. The choice of M.I.T. was the first significant sign. Her fondness for aviation was another. When she left M.I.T. after only two years, she worked at nearby Milwaukee airport for a group of

fledgling aviators as their "girl Friday." Even before this, when only 14 years old, she sold her first article to U. S. Air Services Magazine. The piece, entitled "Why We Want to Fly," typifies young "Dickey's" thinking. In it she described aviation as a means of satisfying the demand for excitement. "There is something about an airport that 'gets' you, and no other word will express it," she said.[4]

Another hint of the Chapelle spirit is evident from a handwritten note appended to the very proper reply to the editor of Air Services acknowledging the check for $7.50 for the article. It read as follows:

> This--gentle reader--is the letter that--a la Unk and Dad--I sent E. N. Findley--but that's just a technical mistake. This kept peace--the following went. . . .
>
> Dear Mr. Findley:
>
> I know this should have come to you years and years --more or less, I mean, but I've spent so long thinking about the First check that that's how it seems. . . .
>
> I also know that the business-like thing to write runs something like "Very grateful to acknowledge receipt of your letter and subsequent check . . . but I wasn't very grateful, or glad, or pleased, I was just plain happy. . . .[5] (Italics hers)

In a later letter she offered to work as a stringer for the magazine. Findley wrote back:

> We do not have at this time any opening on our staff, but it is easy to see in your letter and between the lines thereof, that you will make your own opening somewhere in the field ruled by the written word. It is a fascinating though precarious business to put one little word after another until you have told your story. But a person with your facility in expression will not be happy doing anything else but. . . .[6]

She replied:

> . . . if you will pardon such malignment of the poetic English language, you have got me all wrong, sir. I don't want to be a writer at all--and be chained to a typewriter all my life. (What an essentially and wholly diplomatic thing to tell an editor!) I want to be an aeronautical engineer, and I also desire your honest opinion on the subject; if you will deign to give it.[7] (Italics hers)

Findley's next letter suggested a number of schools which featured aviation courses. He offered her letters of introduction to outstanding educational leaders in the field. The series of letters which began in 1933 continued to 1935, when Dickey Chapelle entered M.I.T.[8]

A letter written to Mr. Findley on July 1, 1936, told of her decision to leave school and ended in her asking for a job. It is important for its insight into the young girl's character:

> The past seventeen years of my life have been one long struggle to be original--I even play unheard of systems of bridge and have [illegible] ideas about which side of the road to drive upon. But this letter marks the funeral oration of that system in my personal history--I am herewith breaking down and joining the other one hundred twenty million Americans; I am writing for a job.[9]

The correspondence between the two continued until 1938. There is no doubt that Earle Findley helped to influence and direct her toward a career in journalism. His early encouragement probably reinforced her in her moment of decision.

Like "One of the Boys"

The two years spent at M.I.T. had their influence too. Miss Chapelle was one of about 20 coeds enrolled there at the time. It was a male atmosphere and her first time away from home. She enjoyed the unique position in which she found herself. It was one she grew fonder of throughout her adult life. She sometimes appeared to be more at ease with men than women, and frequently saw things from their point of view. As she wrote in a piece, "In Defense of Necking," at age 17:

> I am an engineering co-ed, which means that I "get in" on "bull-sessions" of the boys, denied the home ec and liberal arts co-eds, that there are times when I forfeit the great right they have to run the trend of general conversation away from sex, that I see the problem through the eyes of boys.[10]

Those who knew her best saw in this attitude a basic personality trait. Dickey Chapelle always insisted on being treated as an equal in any discussion, whether the topic be sex, war, or what have you. Her willingness to listen to the personal problems or inner thoughts of others resulted in her frequently adopting the role of "father confessor" or confidante, especially with the younger fighting men with whom she associated. In later years, it proved to be a favorite approach to an assignment. She frequently sought opportunities to cover crises from both sides, as in Cuba, Santo Domingo, Lebanon, and Algeria.

At age 20, she was to achieve a first. She described

to Boston Traveler readers "How It Feels To Go 7 Miles a Minute" in an airplane:

> We go up to 10,000 feet. I want to yell, "This is it." Now we will find out if a girl can dive seven miles a minute--and live. I hold my breath. The engine roars. We dive for a huge circle in the airport's sod. I tense myself for the expected pull-out. At seventy miles an hour we float in to a landing. Shakily, I get out, still in one piece. Everybody is amazed. Maybe I have traveled faster than any other woman. I have proved, I think, that girls could become combat pilots.[11]

This fascination for the original became another of her trade marks.

When she began working with the military she went to great lengths to prepare herself for assignments, especially in combat. She was aware of the feeling of apprehension fighting men have that outsiders will jeopardize the mission and increase the risk. As a woman she was likely to be doubly suspect. Her solution was to demonstrate quickly her physical and mental capacity in the combat situation and thus to put the "troops at ease."[12]

On what was probably her first field trip, in Panama in 1943, a New York Times stringer described the reporter's actions:

> Compared with Dickey's later assignments, this was not rugged. We had a 45-foot boat with bunks. . . . The craft had hardly grounded on a sandbar in the fast-running tidal Tuira River before Dickey was overboard waist-deep taking photographs. That evening, after she had rolled up her khaki trousers to step from a cayuco while coming ashore at a thatched-hut village, she was promptly--but harmlessly--bitten by a small fish. Next

> day, as we slogged along a jungle trail after an outboard-driven piragua (dugout) failed, one of her shoes broke away from its sole. Resourcefully she tied it up and made out until we could find a native sandal-maker. Dickey was pretty then, a very handsome girl with lots of long blonde hair, and fair finely textured skin. She was a favorite target of the insects that beset us all.[13]

Her work took her to the Pacific, and she watched the Marines assault Iwo Jima from the Navy hospital ship, U.S.S. Samaritan. Her reaction in a letter to her husband was a mixture of the female and the budding professional:

> I thought perhaps I should think myself a little more a woman tonight. I am not able to do it, Tony; there is something better that a woman could do with these men than to photograph them. I haven't cringed at their wounds, but at my lens; I've worn the enamel off my back teeth only after the actual shooting.[14]

When on lecture tour in the years that followed she was often asked if the horror and obscenity of war ever bothered her, she always responded with a "definite yes." She stressed the need for compassion, realization, and understanding on the part of the people back home.[15]

Her brief, vivid encounter with the reality of war and her conflict with the military resulting in loss of accreditation may have made her impatient with those who insisted that the front was no place for a woman. Her response to this view was to point out that the front was no place for any human being at all. Her solution was a united nations brotherhood working together to ensure that there are no fronts.[16]

Dickey Chapelle had authored nine books before and

during the early part of World War II. For the most part, they dealt with aviation or women in aviation. Some were aimed at getting women into the aviation war industry in diverse capacities. In 1945 her publisher was asked to complete a personnel evaluation of her. It provides a sketch of her in her late 20's. He considered her to have "energy and ability quite out of the common run." He thought her bright, energetic, alert, and intelligent, with an exceptional command of English as a writer on both popular and semi-technical subjects. He rated her general intelligence as of an "unusually high order." He called her extremely industrious, and described her relationship with co-workers as satisfactory.[17]

The Chapelle Photo Team

While pacifism was a part of her basic upbringing, war also had its effect on her. After World War II, she and Tony Chapelle were drawn to organizations devoted to refugee work. He probably spoke for his wife as well when in their application for a position as publicists for the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) he wrote:

> The doctrine of non-violence and fellowship seems to me the sole realistic one. My service experience has made me realize that the violence of war through the ages has led only to greater violence and repeated war.[18]

A letter to the editor in the New York Herald Tribune which appeared after Miss Chapelle's death acknowledged the unselfishness of the Chapelles that led them to give six

years of their professional lives to relief work. Of that period, Mr. Ted Berkman wrote:

> In 1947, when I was head of information for the United Nations Appeal for Children, she /Dickey Chapelle/ brought out to Lake Success some 200 striking photographs of children taken by her and her husband Tony Chapelle during the two previous years in Europe. The collection, of high professional competence and uncommonly moving, had obvious commercial value. Dickey Chapelle turned it over to UNAC-UNICEF unconditionally. She wanted no money, not even a credit line; nothing but the satisfaction of taking part anonymously in a constructive cause.[19]

In June, 1955, the Chapelles were separated. The next few months were difficult for both of them. Dickey had met and married Tony Chapelle when she was just a girl of 18 and he a man of 40. During the years of marriage, he had taught her photography and she proved to be his most accomplished pupil. The letters between the two and to mutual friends reveal their closeness and their deep feeling for one another, even at the moment of separation. She wrote a friend:

> We two have, in the fifteen most wonderful years of anybody's life, somehow reversed too many parts of our respective roles. Perhaps we always both thought we wanted it that way. I did, I know. I wanted Tony to train me to do the un-wifely more and more and he obliged. . . .[20]

Tony wrote:

> During these years I grew to complete dependence on Dickey in all things with the possible exception of money (which never seemed very important to either of us) and I think that it has been the reversal of our normal roles that has soured me. . . .[21]

Attempts at reconciliation failed. The two found that they wanted different things from life.

Their final exchange of letters was tender and held no trace of bitterness. Tony wrote Dickey:

> Whatever promises you made me, whether for your peace of mind or mine; I release you from. As you know, our marriage was not legal and you are as single as the day I met you.* You are free to use my name (and I hope you will). . . . I have every confidence that whatever you want you will get and wherever you want to go you will go. I hope from the bottom of my heart because I love you very much and always will, that the road you travel will be a pleasant one filled with love and kindness and bylines.[22]

She replied:

> Perhaps in fact tomorrow holds something quite different than either of us--such warm, such erring, such damn human people!--can think of amidst our urgent impatience of this day, this particular stormy moment![23]

Careering in Earnest

From that point in time, Dickey Chapelle devoted her considerable talent and energy to becoming a foreign correspondent. There were short intervals when she took other employment because her stories were not selling and she needed the money and the renewed confidence that comes

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*A letter from Dickey Chapelle to Attorney Sol. H. Cohn dated January 24, 1956, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3, forwarded two documents showing that Tony Chapelle was not divorced from his first wife, Carmel White Chapelle, until January 10, 1947, six years after his marriage to Dickey. Carmel Chapelle got the divorce on the grounds of desertion. The records indicated that a Mexican divorce acquired by Tony before he married Dickey was illegal.

with work and a regular routine. But she quickly returned to her first love, reporting.

In this connection, the Reverend John W. Cyrus, pastor of the First Unitarian Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, commented at the funeral services for Miss Chapelle that: "She never really worked for anybody. She always found publications to send her where she wanted to go and to report the way she wanted."[24]

Her first post-World War II assignment was with the Marines near San Diego, California. In addition to covering Marine recruit training, she had the opportunity to observe the new Marine concept of "vertical envelopment" in which the Marines combine their traditional over the beach landing with helicopter assault. She had a chance to make pictures of napalm bombing from close-up and began to get the feel of what war corresponding was all about. The experience was exhilarating and she wrote to Tony Chapelle of her growing confidence that she was learning her profession:

> . . . The point I'm trying to make is that I woke up, all my reflexes working, spent the morning collecting props and conferring with the air controller, and went out at the appointed hour (1400) and at least outwardly kept my head and shot at exactly the predetermined exposure, focus, composition and occasion. This doesn't amount to much, perhaps, but other people fouled up their gear and got fussed and I don't think I did. One reason I think I got as far as I did was because I'd had nothing on my mind except to do the best job I could on that picture. I may be pretty disgusted with myself when I finally do see what I did, but I think the way I went about it was correct. It's the way I think I like to go about making pictures . . . does that tell you anything about me, and the kind of

> wife I could make you or anybody? A gal who would outrate a problematical picture over the kind of devotion you offer me? And gave me for so long? The gal's crazy. To sit here after a cafeteria dinner by herself and look around a one-bed room littered with with /sic/ ugly field equipment, and to say to herself, "Yes, this is what I want to do. I've always wanted to do it, I want to do it now, I'm trained for it, it needs doing."??? Like some of the crazy characters around me say, "I want to be a Marine"--and do the damnedest things and you know how crazy that can be--I say, "I want to be a foreign correspondent." I've even mentally added that that does mean a certain amount of war corresponding, and on this story, I'm glad--just plain glad--for the training I'm getting personally at what is probably the best and surely the safest . . . so really dear, I'm only still playing at my correspondent role, just as these Marines are playing at their business. But, thank goodness, I shall not have to wait for live ammo to see what I'm learning about corresponding here![25] (Italics hers)

The Importance of "People"

Read her stories or talk with people who were her friends and there is one fact which becomes more and more apparent--Dickey Chapelle felt very deeply, even emotionally, about people. She once asked a friend if there really were people who don't let their hearts run away with their heads.[26] She resented the so-called methodology employed by a New York institute involved in security studies, because of its indifference to people as individuals. She told its director:

> We'll shortly rebel against the application of intellectualism the Institute represents, and we'll pull down hard again on the whole structure of intellectualism in our unreasoning disappointment with you. We simply refuse to be led by humans who don't see us, WHOSE SPLENDID MINDS CAN BRILLIANTLY EXPRESS THEMSELVES ALL OVER THE PLACE ALL DAY LONG AND NEVER MENTION--US.

> People. Live people. I think the first requirement of lasting leadership is knowledge of those one leads, and in this subject you seem monstrously disinterested.[27]

She was a human interest writer. Her feature stories were "people centered." They led her around the globe to trouble spots where people suffered. Her quarrel with communism was not directed specifically at the system but at the evil it represented when reduced to its lowest common denominator--the terror it applied to people who unwillingly were forced to live under it.

She applied this philosophy to war and used it to answer the chronic question of what men in battle die for:

> I believe a man goes into combat for the defense of the folks back home. But no country, no slogan, no edict, no law, no global pronouncement, no parliamentary decision is ever what he dies for. He dies for the man on his right or left. He dies exposing himself so that they or all of them may live, in that order. Greater love hath no man. And there isn't any other word.[28]

Friends claim that it was her interest in the Hungarian refugees that brought her to cover the revolt in 1956 and led to her imprisonment by the communist regime. The 52 days spent in a Hungarian prison is said to have influenced all her subsequent work.[29]

"Prepare Like a Soldier"

She prepared herself physically for assignments like a professional athlete prepares for the game. Wherever she was, even in New York City, she would try to run two miles a day. She kept in peak condition with 15 to 30 minutes

daily performance of an army drill. She had injured and then re-injured a knee on various excursions in the field, and was hospitalized for a time in 1960. She became impatient with the reconditioning progress afterward, and told her doctor:

> This ten days' inactivity (not quite; you did give me one exercise you'd permit me to do with my arms and 10 lb. weights sitting down) has simply loused up my joy-of-life! Please, Dr. Kraus, surely if I am free of every interest but growing better muscles, we can work out a program better than this one! What is it I expect? To be professionally directed in how to work every undamaged tissue in my frame every bit I can push it every day. . . . How would you suggest I go about it?[30]

Miss Chapelle had favorite foods and drink that, together with exercise, kept her fit. Steak was her favorite meat. She kept cases of "whole stringed beans" under her bed so she would not run out of these sometimes hard-to-get vegetables. She would drink nothing alcoholic except beer and preferred imported "Pryer's Double Dark." At parties she circulated the room sipping a glass of dark, amber-colored liquid--bouillon--and chain smoking Pall Mall cigarettes.[31] Sleep was important to her and she made an effort to get plenty of it. She was brave but not fearless. As she said of her parachuting:

> I was terribly afraid of jumping before I tried it. The 36 hours preceding my first jump I wouldn't like to live through again. Now, I think it's one of the greatest experiences one can have. I never jump for fun; only to get a story I couldn't get in any other way.[32]

Her assignments generally involved exposure to physical hardship as well as the inevitable dangers inherent in war corresponding. She lived them and discussed them freely, but rarely wrote about them. Apparently she accepted them as part of the job. She did expect to be paid higher rates when her stories exposed her to being shot at. Her autobiography details the rigors of reporting from an eyewitness point of view.

In the summer of 1957 she spent 32 days with the rebel Algerian Army of Liberation in the mountains on the outskirts of the Sahara Desert. Of that experience she wrote:

> As the days passed, I knew I was learning several new abilities I'd never be taught by American military forces. How to live in the desert in August with only a pint of water and two cups of tea a day. How to limit my urination to once a day so I would not need any more liquid, and to robe myself with a thick blanket when I went out in the noon-day sun so I would not lose water by perspiring. How to work on only half a dozen dates and a chunk of sugar half the size of my hand every day. How to walk for five hours without a break and to sleep well on rock. Laugh at myself though I should, the pride I felt was important--and bigger than the hurt in my throat from the thirst or the ache in my back from the rocks.[33]

Under these conditions the reporter found it difficult to remain impartial. In her syndicated series, recounting her experiences, she said:

> For a correspondent, a war always starts by belonging to somebody else. If the U. S. is involved, you say to yourself that you're a civilian and the fighting is the soldier's job. And if there are no American troops, of course, it isn't your war just because you're assigned to cover it. After a little

time on contested real estate, though, something happens to that fine detachment. It's just happened to me.[34]

Her Philosophy

The Chapelle philosophy as expressed in her lectures and writing reveals the idealism and crusading instinct of the reporter. She insisted that only by bringing correct information to the American masses could their will to resist communism be strengthened. "It is the duty of every newspaperman to supply this news," she said. "And the duty of every citizen to become acquainted with it."[35]

Her Vietnam reports gave her recognition and a measure of success which she as an individual required. Their acceptance also quieted the doubts which accompanied the many frustrations of her early career in journalism. She had set a goal for herself--to become a war correspondent. Exactly when she achieved the goal is difficult to say. Perhaps she realized it in Vietnam in 1962 when she wrote:

> Now I know what I was doing here, and I carried that knowledge with me in every mission I went on in Vietnam. I jumped with the Vietnamese airborne troops six times into drop zones which had to be cleared of enemy snipers and held secure within a ring of infantrymen each time we landed on them. On operations with the brigade, I walked more than 200 miles, photographed enemy dead, their own dead and wounded, the Reds they took prisoner and the suspects they freed. I followed them in 100°-plus heat and torrential rain, once for six days and nights without returning from the field. I did this out of a conviction that some American outside the military ought to know and report at first-hand what our allies against communism are doing, what they are able to do.[36]

Dickey Chapelle likened her profession to the technique of parachuting. She had once been told by an army training instructor that when jumping "there is absolutely no reason to close your eyes." She applied the advice to journalism and called it the cardinal principle for reporters and the litany of her work as one.[37]

But fundamental in her approach to reporting was the importance of the people involved. She maintained that in warfare as in other endeavors, technical details were not the deciding factor--people were![38]

Her Humor

She had a lighter side that was easily apparent to her friends, if less obvious to her readers. William Giles, her editor at the National Observer, recalled that "she laughed easily and well, often at herself."[39] Her private correspondence is filled with humorous stories exchanged with intimates, and hilarious contre-temps which she unwittingly created. A letter to her Uncle George describing her visit at sea with the U. S. Sixth Fleet is apropos. She was a guest aboard Vice Admiral Brown's flagship, the cruiser U.S.S. Salem, and steamed in company with a number of aircraft carriers, destroyers, and auxiliary ships which made up that formidable fleet. As a woman, at sea, she enjoyed many privileges not usually offered to reporters. Of the experience she wrote:

> Once, however, I was permitted to try to maneuver the fleet so it could post /sic/ more impressively for its mass portrait under way. The ghosts of John Paul Jones and Ed Steichen (he's the grandaddy saint of all navy photographers) both rolled around Valhalla in hysterical mirth watching my efforts while young officers-of-the-deck drafted resignations left and right! I guess--well, it seems there's more to this seamanship business than I thought.[40]

On another occasion she laughingly told a lecture group about her stay with Castro forces in Cuba:

> While I was dodging "Made in USA" bullets, shot from "Made in USA" rifles, this "Made in USA" reporter was treated just like everyone's little sister. The other day I paid my taxes and realized that I had paid for some of those bullets that I ducked--I am quite resentful of it.[41]

And an Associated Press story datelined Danang, South Vietnam, November 4, 1965, is indicative of her sense of humor, if tragic in its ending:

> Yesterday she /Dickey Chapelle/ bet Associated Press photographer Henri Huet a dime that the Marine unit she was with would be fired on before his. She lost by half an hour when Mr. Huet's outfit was pinned down for a time by sniper fire. "Okay," she said with a laugh, "tomorrow I'll have my chance."[42]

The next day she was killed.

Two Views

Two character analyses, one by the reporter herself, another by a colleague, offer unusual insight to the study.

Self Portrait

Writing to her publisher regarding her autobiography, the reporter examined her own conscience:

Let me look at this business of writing an autobiography which won't attract criticism. Such a goal can't be one which I ought to take seriously. In 41 years of human hyperactivity, I must somewhere along the line have done a slew of things for which I damnn well ought to be criticized. If all were eliminated from the book, it seems to me the accuracy of the document would be highly suspect. Also, what's the matter with a frankly controversial book, or with being a frankly controversial character? Will it per se sell less well than the other?

I guess I do have to ask you to decide what are "admissable" or "intolerable" criticisms. I brought up one to avoid--that I speak from the far side of the cold war. Out of my last nine missions (Algeria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, the 6th Fleet, Cuba, the 7th Fleet, Formosa, Korea) on only two was I sent to the leftist side, so I didn't want to live with the consequences of emphasizing those stories. I think you and I see the solution to this problem in just the same terms; we'll pull in a report from "our" side between them.

Now, what about other criticisms? I can't apply the rest of this letter to the book directly. I'll just talk about it personally and ask you to tell me if or how the book is involved.

Here are some criticisms which I have heard made of my work or of me, together with my feeling about them. Yes, I'm being real spirited, and I don't think this proves I am either right or wrong, in spite of what the old Chinese philosophers and the modern Western psychiatrists insist. The first six below usually get a defensive reaction out of me on the spot when made to my face. The others I just love to hear because they represent major tactical errors on the part of my critics and usually I can win the argument without raising my blood pressure except by laughing.

(1) That I like adventure. I'm always taking this for a compliment when it was meant as a criticism. But I hope I always deserve the remark. The word means "to dare" in my dictionary; Admiral Byrd once called it "the certainty of uncertainty." I'm not sure I really like adventuring any better than I would like clerking in the A&P but I am mortally sure I like the consequences--the sense of inner security that comes from having survived enough threats so you can say to yourself that the next unknown or other threat probably

won't panic you either. No, there's more. I don't just not-dread tomorrow; I usually welcome it, and this seems to be a good way to live--for me. And I deeply respect the adventurous principle. The only way a society was created in which a woman could think she'd chosen to adventure--that is, the American society--was by a lot of people including my ancestors doing a great deal of daring. And I can't imagine that most American women don't share my taste for daring--they're having babies at a greater rate than ever before, and I can't think of a greater act of daring than to commit yourself to being responsible for other human beings for the next 20 years or so.

(2) That I am inaccurate. The research departments of THE READER'S DIGEST and THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC have between them checked out a total of a dozen of my articles since 1953. Thank God researchers exist--I once inadvertently moved Iwo Jima into the wrong ocean! But neither to my knowledge has ever made a copy change which drew criticism from the editors, and that's a record I'm darn proud of.

(3) That I was simply "not there" when the story happened. Oh yes, Barbara, people really do say this. All I ought to answer is that I honestly don't know any other reporter who is as fussy as I am about not reporting anything they haven't eye-witnessed. What I do answer, usually, is to snap a question back about where my critics were while I was "not there"--a cheap trick but it wouldn't work if said critics were in the right geographical position to criticize me.

(3) /sic/ That I am slipshod. I'm so darn lazy I have to fight against deserving this all the time but I think Hobe has compared me favorably with other contributors on the matters of meeting deadlines and delivering organized and legible copy.

(4) That I am irresponsible. I just don't know what this means. When I got into trouble in 1945 with the Navy command for moving on to Okinawa, it was I--not the boss back in New York who told me to "be sure you're first woman somewhere"--who was penalized. When I was captured in Hungary, it was I--not the men from LIFE and the Rescue Committee who told me they wanted that medicine followed into Hungary--who went to jail and who is still publicly protecting their identity. When in 1957 and 1958, I misjudged the movement of a strafing attach bomber in Algeria and then in Cuba, it

was I--not the bosses back in New York who needed to know who was bombing whom with the planes--who ducked lead, I'm bragging, not bitching--I knew the conditions under which I'd been employed, I'm proud of taking my medicine and coming back for more. But what's with this "irresponsible" stuff? I made the mistakes; I was punished. End of story.

As far as other people's lives being risked to protect mine, this is the normal condition of existence for everyone in every fighting force ever committed. If I had a nickel for every time some man whose name I don't know has gallantly stuck his neck out to cover me (like the Cuban character in the jeep accident who didn't jump because I couldn't jump)--I'd have a considerable sum of money. And yes, being a woman and a cripple means I do invite it more than if I were Bronco Nagurski. B u t--I'm acutely conscious of the problem, I've been expertly trained over years to minimize the necessity for this sort of thing, and I can go only where the fighting force invites me <u>after</u> they've weighed the value of the publicity I may be able to give them against the multiple nuisances of putting up with me, including the menace of their own reflexes of gallantry. If in spite of all this I drew criticism, maybe I have it coming.

(5) That I am pro- or anti- any body of political thinking. (If I only knew what "democracy" and "liberty" meant in general terms, I'd be pro-them. But I understand the terms only as they apply to specific cases, so I can't make that claim.) I am anti-government-by-fear or even influence gained by fear. But I am not "pro-Algerian" or "pro-Castro." I believe recognition of what I reported from Algeria would benefit French and damage Soviet interests, so I resent being called "anti-French" because I so obviously consider the French government's present position dangerously mistaken in some respects. I believe recognition of what I reported from Cuba would prevent further Soviet takeover of the island's government, so I resent being called anti-U.S. because I say the American government and people are making dangerous misjudgments in dealing with Castro. The general argument is this: I can't hope to change what our enemies do. But if I fail to point out where I believe we are contributing to <u>their</u> victories, I can't live with me. I'd call this the only patriotic point of view and any aberrance from it disloyal. (Sounds great; hope I live up to it.)

(6) That I am a sentimental woman. (Heard this again at the Press Club Saturday.) Hooray! This is true on both counts, and the day it isn't, I'll be dead and no criticism will matter to me. Of course I am empathetic with underdogs, people whose public voices are muffled and people who have trouble expressing themselves for any reason; what else is a reporter for? (Or, who else?) Of course I side with prisoners against guards, enlisted men against officers, weakness against power. And if the guards, the officers, and the other powerful people are thereby so badly hurt as to scream against mere words and pictures from one unarmed near-sighted female, I guess I picked the less-weak side after all!

As far as sentiment warping my judgment of historic events, it surely does. And it also is at least as important as objective logic in determining history. Otherwise, the colonies couldn't have licked the British in 1776, and we wouldn't have noisy American female correspondents today.

Does my sentimentality imbue the people I cover with virtues they don't have? Yes, I'm sure it does. That's why I'm so fussy about seeing them and limiting my reports to telling what I saw, so the reader can judge the evidence for himself. For example, I said the Algerians I knew were not a mob but a unit of an army, using the word in its dictionary meaning. I did not say they were good or bad, right or wrong. I quoted the members of that army as saying they would fight till they won or were dead as individuals; I did not say they were brave or cowardly. I further said I found this remark convincing; I did not say they would or would not make good their pledge but just told what its impact on one observer, this one, had been on the spot. If this is less than objective, I guess I deserve to be criticized for not knowing what objective could mean in this situation.

(7) That I am corrupt. To my vanity as a reporter, probably. Otherwise, what's my price and when am I going to get around to collecting? (If you're a female around troops, of course, your price is supposed to be male attention. There's a euphemism for you! I bet Florence Nightingale had her troubles with this criticism, too. However, in practice, this implied deal doesn't work out romantically at all. Not once has a general ever offered to trade me a SECRET operations order for my fair white virtue, and if it sounds as if I'm complaining, I guess in a sense I sure am. You get bitter in your told /sic/ age when you hear all

your irresistability in this situation, and it turns out in a few decades you can't find the damn thing.)

(8) That I am unwise. This is a fair criticism. I'm sure I have been and am only less so now than I used to be. That's precisely why I go on being primarily a reporter, and ordinarily do not try to be an analyst, a prophet, a commentator, or any kind of boss at all even to a maid or secretary.

(9) That being a woman I must be badly prepared to observe, especially to observe warfare. Thanks to the Marines and paratroops, I can now answer this by saying I've had more formal training in my profession than almost any male forward area reporter with whom I work (I'd been shot at before most of the men who covered the Lebanon landing for major U. S. newspapers were out of journalism school.)

(10) That I am wrong and they--the critics--can prove it. Of all the criticisms I can imagine, I would welcome this one the most--if anybody meant it. I can think of no higher usefulness for any reporter than to somehow have forced his or her readers to try to prove the truth. If someday my alleged credibility is destroyed because I was demonstrated to have been just plain wrong, I'll consider the fact of the demonstration my little private piece of immortality and I swear I'll shut up. Indifference to proof, the refusal to look for it, the unwillingness to commit anything but claims--these are the real sins, the real wrongs against which the profession of journalism ought to be fighting, and against which I hope I have truly--to paraphrase a fine old American document--pledged my life, my fortune and my sacred honor.

Well, so much for the negative approach.

Now, what would I like to stand for? What are the compliments I treasure? (Yours.)

(1) That I move. That is, that if I have said I will take an action, I do not temporize indefinitely; my associates can depend on some result from my existence beside words.

(2) That I try. That is, that I won't say "I can't" till I have actually tried and failed more than once or twice.

(3) That I may be a story-teller but I'm not a gossip. That is, that confidences to me don't get back to embarrass or endanger the confider.

(4) That I don't bluff easily. That is, that I don't react to a threat the same as a danger, and I try to test for the difference.

(5) That I can do without. I mean that in the soldierly or priestly sense--that I do not cease to function if luxury, comfort and security are absent.

(6) That I have good manners. That is, that I do not make any people around me uncomfortable--if I have the brains and sensitivity to avoid it.

(7) That I am healthy. However unconventionally I choose to eat, rest and work, I don't make myself weaker for it. I've been superficially injured four times (knock on wood) as you know, but I didn't lose a day's work then nor have I lost one for reasons of health in a number of years.

(8) That I do not lean on others more than I make myself available to be leaned on by others. Most adults take care of children; since I don't, it seems doubly important to me that I, as one person, at least take care of one person--myself.

(9) That I do not express a professional judgment I am unwilling to "back up" with the bet of myself. That is, if I say the Algerians are an army, or the Chinese Marines are a dependable assault force, I mean that I am willing to trust the defense of me personally to the Algerians, or to go personally with the Chinese Marines when they assault.

Now what's with this smug, self-conscious creature? Just for fun, here are some criticisms against which I couldn't defend myself--that I'm contrary, self-centered, lacking in the grace of subtlety and far too rarely loving. And that I didn't produce a printable book manuscript last year. (But there was a justice--I earned neither money nor glory, so I'm even on that one.) And as the saying goes, I'll have to do better than <u>that</u>, won't I?[43] (Italics hers.)

<u>Another View</u>

Veteran New York <u>Daily News</u> correspondent Joseph

Fried, who, when asked about Dickey Chapelle's impact, responded:

> Because she was one of the very few women on the inside track of major, hairy stories, Chapelle became sort of a legend. Her rapid conversational manner tended to bowl one over at first meeting. So did her use of tough guy talk and bravado. It took time to realize that the brashness, the generous sprinkling of four-letter words and bravado were so much camouflage for a warm and sometimes shy woman seeking acceptance in a man's field. The brashness was abundantly there, but perhaps because Chapelle felt it was expected in order to explain her almost unique presence on the firing range instead of beside a gas range in a kitchen in suburbia.[44]

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]Professor Robert P. Meyer interview with author at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, May 13, 1968.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Manuscript, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[5]Letter from D. Chapelle, September 24, 1933, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[6]Letter from Earle Findley, November 24, 1933, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[7]Letter from D. Chapelle, January 9, 1934, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[8]Letters from D. Chapelle dated May 30, 1934, and August 25, 1935, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[9]Letter from D. Chapelle, July 1, 1936, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[10]Manuscript, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[11]The Boston (Mass.) Traveler, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Series 3.

[12]Professor Robert P. Meyer interview with the author at the University of Wisconsin, May 13, 1968.

[13]Overseas Press Bulletin, November 20, 1965.

[14]Letter from D. Chapelle, February 29, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[15]Keuka College (N. Y.) Keukonian, October 17, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[16]Letter from D. Chapelle to Miss Alice Thompson, July 21, 1950, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[17]Letter from R. M. Cleveland, January 25, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[18]Letter from T. Chapelle, October 17, 1947, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[19]New York (N. Y.) Herald Tribune, Letter to the Editor, November 9, 1965.

[20]Letter from D. Chapelle to the Plimmers, June 13, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[21]Letter from T. Chapelle to the Plimmers, June 6, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[22]Letter from T. Chapelle, August 12, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[23]Letter from D. Chapelle, August 13, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[24]Milwaukee (Wis.) Sentinel, November 13, 1965.

[25]Letter from D. Chapelle, November 2, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[26]Letter from D. Chapelle, March 5, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[27]Letter from D. Chapelle to C. Williams, September 21, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[28]What's A Woman Doing Here? (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962), p. 80.

[29]Overseas Press Bulletin, November 20, 1965.

[30]Letter from D. Chapelle to Dr. Hans Kraus, April 15, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[31]Tony Chapelle interview with author in New York City, April 19, 1968.

[32]Milwaukee (Wis.) Journal, July 16, 1959.

[33]What's A Woman Doing Here?, op. cit., p. 225.

[34]Philadelphia (Pa.) Daily News, September 16, 1957.

[35]Keuka College (N. Y.) Keukonian, September 28, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[36]"What's A Woman Doing Here?" A Reader's Digest Book Section (Pleasantville, N. Y.: The Reader's Digest Association, 1962), p. 29.

[37]What's A Woman Doing Here?, op. cit., p. 281.

[38]"What's A Woman Doing Here?" A Reader's Digest Book Section, op. cit., p. 29.

[39]The National Observer, November 8, 1965.

[40]Letter from D. Chapelle, July 13, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[41]Lecture to the Thomas Jefferson Woman's Club, Richmond, Indiana, February 1959.

[42]Milwaukee (Wis.) Journal, November 4, 1965.

[43]Letter from D. Chapelle to publisher, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[44]Joseph Fried, New York Daily News, response to author's questionnaire, May 10, 1968.

CHAPTER III

THE PRODUCT OF HER LABORS

Dickey Chapelle was a prolific writer. At times, her style was reminiscent of a stream of consciousness which typified her conversation. The result was a need for constant revision of her work, a weakness frequently apparent in her private correspondence.[1] She and Tony Chapelle developed a writing method that carried over into a working routine. They would "kick" an idea back and forth to better organize and structure a story. Later, when she worked alone, Miss Chapelle would sit before her typewriter and pour her thoughts into lengthy letters to publishers, family, or friends, because it helped her to think out her story. With age and experience, the need for rewriting lessened; and while her natural style continued to flow generously, it became more disciplined.[2]

Her ability to write served her well in the various phases of her professional life.

The Caption and the Story

Among the most demanding requirements on a writer are the limitations in space and, at the same time, the need for adequate explanation imposed in captioning

photographs accompanying a manuscript. Miss Chapelle photographed Marine casualties at Iwo Jima and Okinawa while an accredited correspondent for Fawcett Magazine's Popular Mechanics and Woman's Day in 1945. Her awareness of these requirements as well as an unusual dramatic sensitivity is apparent in some of her published photographs and captions.[3]

Of the Battle for Iwo Jima, she wrote from the USS Samaritan:

> There was no wound that did not bleed on the after well deck that day. A pool of blood ceased to be a symbol; it was just something a man left behind him like his pack or his gun or his helmet. Never before had the sanity--or the flesh-and-blood-of America's fighting men met a more violent onslaught than these men had faced only hours before. The odds on survival were these: every man who was hit had a seven to one chance of not being killed outright. The casualties who were evacuated had 97 chances out of 100 to live.

Her photos and captions told a heart-rending story:

> A man's life is being sayed in this picture. . . .
>
> * * * *
>
> This Marine corporal preferred to prop himself up while being logged aboard, even if it hurt. The Navy corpsman with him has dealt with the wounded too long to take that small and painful satisfaction from his patient.
>
> * * * *
>
> There was white foam on this Marine's lips when he came aboard.
>
> * * * *
>
> This is one of the Marine non-coms who wrested the fighter airstrip on Iwo from its fanatic Jap defenders. His lungs and shoulders were torn by gunshot almost at

the moment of victory and he came to the hospital ship with the odds for survival against him. He lay as the photograph shows him, willing himself back to life for three days and nights. His jaw muscles were not relaxed at any time. He won his fight.

* * * *

The man is a 19-year-old Marine private first class. . . . The wound had severed his windpipe and he could breathe only through a tube (in nurse's hand) inserted through his throat. He could take nourishment only through a second tube which passed from his nose almost to his stomach (left). He would have died of shock had the nose tube become fouled; he would have died of strangulation had the breathing tube been closed by mucous or pus for as little as five minutes.

* * * *

The piece of plaster sculptor /sic/ here is a man's body, his trunk and thigh. He was the last of a series of cast patients which doctors aboard had encased in plaster at the rate of one every 30 minutes for two days and two nights almost without interruption. The fatigue in their faces is genuine and well earned.

Postwar Volunteer Work

Immediately after the war, Miss Chapelle spent two years as a Senior Editor for Seventeen Magazine before she and her husband formed the American Voluntary Information Services Overseas, Inc. (AVISO) in 1948, supplying photographs and text to publicity departments of the American Friends Service Committee, UNICEF, Save the Children Federation, and other humanitarian agencies from fourteen countries of Europe.[4] Their travels through Europe for the next six years photographing the effects of war were aimed at reminding people what havoc the war left and the problems that remained.[5] AVISO was not designed to make a profit and

made none. However, the Chapelles succeeded in one thing--making a reputation.

A letter to Mr. John Kavanaugh, Quaker information director, reveals something of the spirit of the Polish people who survived and of the reporter's feeling for them. From Warsaw, she wrote shortly after their arrival:

> . . . I think--the Poles we've spoken with simply have sufficient spirit--will, and laughter, and enthusiasm, and faith--to share it with anyone they feel they can trust. Our observation (and goodness knows, we apologize for making one so quickly) is just a business of walking along Marshall Koska Street in the snow and suddenly discovering we like Poland and particularly this broken city, whose people keep so to themselves the big chunks of rubble that must be in their hearts, too.[6]

A memorandum circulated within the Quaker organization spelled out the Chapelles' responsibilities and evaluated their performance. It stated:

> . . . They /the Chapelles/ will make such records of Quaker work as seem desirable to them and to our on-the-spot workers. . . . Certainly all of us here are grateful for the wonderful background material they are sending us--it is so compassionate, so filled with practical information, and yet so imaginative too. Their own standards are so high that they should have little difficulty in meeting requirements now that we have been given the right steer as to what will be generally acceptable.[7]

A later memorandum summarized the reaction to the Chapelle material by several prestige publications and other outlets. According to the report, orders for photographs were received from Redbook, Good Housekeeping, Woman's Day, Holiday, and Poland Today. The Ladies Home Journal, Seventeen, Survey Graphics, Look, Atlantic Monthly,

and the New Yorker were considering the material. Harper's Bazaar and Woman's Home Companion had expressed interest, as had Associated Press News Features, News Enterprises Association, and King Features.[8]

On a State Department Mission

The U. S. State Department's Technical Cooperation Administration (Point Four) sent the Chapelles to rural Iraq, Iran, and India for two years beginning in 1952. Tony and Dickey Chapelle were participants in a great adventure. Their mission was described in an article in the April 1953 issue of National Geographic entitled "Report from the Locust Wars." The seventeen-page piece with eighteen illustrations selected from a file of over 3,000 was Dickey Chapelle's first contribution to that publication. At that time the photographs were Tony Chapelle's responsibility and the text his wife's. The approach, with its emphasis on the people who made "Point Four" a working reality was typical Dickey Chapelle human interest. The story's beginning set the mood for a tale of people-to-people achievement. It was datelined Iraq, and read:

> In Iraq's Parliament or our Congress in Washington, D. C., sheiks and senators might inquire into the worth and meaning of international cooperation to increase the world's living standard. There it may be hard to define "Point 4 Mission." Here it is so easy. Here, Point 4 is men from two nations squatting around a lamp, planning campaigns against invading insect hordes

> on a bilingual map. It is men working long hours in remote wastes to conquer one of man's oldest scourges. It is pilots risking their lives to help prevent famine.[9]

An article similar in purpose, to promote Point Four, also was published in the Saturday Evening Post of December 26, 1953. It was headed "There'll Be No Christmas For Them!" and was an even stronger plea for recognition of the various humanitarian programs. Again, the words were Dickey Chapelle's and the message was compelling:

> It is our collective thinking which directs our government; this is the simple axiom of democracy. Narrowing the rule to foreign policy, it is our collective point of view which shapes our dealings with the world. In turn, it is these dealings which, we are assured, will determine our survival.
>
> It is not an accident that the reports which foreign correspondents call their "happy ending" pieces almost always concern American actions abroad based on recognition of this premise (forswear smugness and recognize that all men were created equal). There is the Federal Government's Foreign Operation's Administration, carrying on what has come to be known as Point Four work. It has made better the lives of many of the people mentioned in these pages. There are the outrightly humanitarian efforts--who has not heard of the world-beloved Quakers? And there are private industries like the Arabian-American Oil Company, which hammered out a contract with an absolute monarch that spelled schools and doctors and self-respect for his people.
>
> These moves are often called enlightened self-interest, but the happy endings do not come from mere enlightenment. They come from action based on simple realism. And an essential step toward realism is a perspective oriented to the majority of the earth's inhabitants, not just the fortunate ones.[10]

Reading beyond the organizational plugs, the focus, as with much of what Miss Chapelle wrote, was on people and

human interest.

Tony Chapelle continued to help Dickey even after their separation. He processed her exposed film. In addition, he offered valuable suggestions to Dickey on her first independent photo assignments. She was hard at work on a Marine training story when he wrote her:

> Here are a few random notes based on your pictures that I have here and was looking over last night. The first thought I have is that you take too many "random" shots. Basic complaint outside of what seems to me to be overshooting is an improper use of your meter. /He then made specific recommendations to correct the error./. . . You are working too close--don't go to the other extreme and go too far away but try and hit some sort of a compromise. With your disadvantage of glasses and also with the stress of working fast--you have a tendency to go to /sic/ close to the edges and sometimes clipping off part of your picture. Anyhow--please don't take it from this that your stuff is bad --it isn't--it's wonderful--but I do think from what I see and know of it that it could have been done on one tenth the film.[11]

Imprisonment in Hungary

When Dickey Chapelle left Hungary in January 1957, after fifty-two days in a Communist prison, she was a shaken young woman. She acknowledged the efforts of the U. S. State Department in her behalf. Tony Chapelle, together with many of Miss Chapelle's friends and relatives, had worked equally hard to gain her freedom. He reminded her of this fact in a short letter; the tone held a trace of bitterness and a broad accusation. It read in part:

> . . . Anyhow too many people helped, some because they love you and some because they were paid. I don't suppose that anyone else will think of this--but you

> finally managed to do what no one else has managed before you--of course there have been imitators since. But you were the first--the first one to get captured in Hungary because you wanted to.[12]

At any rate, the experience sobered the reporter and provided her with the material for a Reader's Digest feature. She accepted an invitation from novelist James Michener to write the piece at his Pennsylvania farm. The story, done with his help, appeared in the Digest's December 1957 issue.[13] Its winning of the magazine's annual Christmas award has already been noted.

Thus, her first real adventure as a foreign correspondent rewarded her with a taste of fame and a degree of financial success. Other opportunities followed. Eyewitness reporting became her stock in trade. She called her profession "a great big see and tell game." She would not settle for a secondary source reporting; for her it had to be, "I saw."[14]

On Foreign Assignment

Her reports on the Algerian rebellion in 1957 for the Spadea Syndicate were sensitive accounts of an underdog struggle by an underdeveloped people against a colonial power. The situation had all the elements which appeal most to a Dickey Chapelle type correspondent. She quickly identified with the Algerian people and reported their anguish. "They are not criminals or Communists or primitives," she said. "There are 10,000,000 of them and they

are people. They are a people being united by civil war. After a month underground with them, to me, they are a nation."[15] During her stay with the Algerian Army of Liberation, she "snapped" 100 dozen photographs and wrote of the bravery and generosity of the rebels. Their kindness touched her, and she was reminded of her childhood as she observed: "I can remember being taught as a child that a vignette of love among human beings is two people eating from the same bowl, each pushing toward the other the choicest morsels."[16]

Other of her Algerian materials appeared in Life's December 8, 1957, edition and in Pageant in April 1958.

The transition between war reporting and describing events in peacetime is sometimes difficult for the correspondent to make. Miss Chapelle explained her feelings on the subject in her autobiography as she turned to another phase of her journalism career in 1957:

> Though any correspondent will tell you the significant bits of history he's seen in his life are ultimately dramatic--war, blood, terror--most of the time the job is a great deal like other jobs with highs and lows and even long stretches that are neither.
>
> Almost half of the last five years, I've spent on assignments as different from those in Hungary or Algeria as day is from night. I think warmly of them as privileged adventure--definitely highs. They are professional reporting jobs, too, important ones, but usually empty of dread, light-hearted and at times happily near-zany.
>
> I mean the routine coverage of the peacetime movements and maneuvers of American forces all over the world, in my case most often the U. S. Navy and Marines. . . .[17]

Christmas 1957 was spent with the Turks in barren outposts which guarded their borders adjacent to Russia. She was fascinated with the dedication of the Turkish fighting men and applauded their indifference to the military might of the Soviet Union. She paid the Turkish Armed Forces her highest compliment when she said: "I know of no other military force where the blankets are as tight or the weapons as handy--except possibly the U. S. Marines."[18] Her fondness for the dramatic phrase was plainly evident as she summed up her impressions on the Turkish assignment in the Digest. "Standing there a few feet from Russian soil, I thought how thankful all Americans should be to have such allies."[19] The feeling apparently was reciprocated if a letter written to her family three days after Christmas is any indication. From Bandira, Turkey, she wrote:

> Nope, I didn't get around to buying me a present, but I got one--"my" infantry regiment at Erzerum, the outfit whose training I covered in the snow for two days, gave me a black semi-precious stone cigarette holder marked with their insignia. Their bandy-legged colonel, who has about as much sentiment in his craggy face as the Rock of Gibraltar, south side, came down to the train to present it with a speech saying that anytime, anywhere, but especially if he was killing Russians, I could be a member of his command. . . . Which incident probably sums up the whole situation--personal, professional, and political.[20]

Six months later, her coverage of the Lebanon landing with the U. S. Marines, described for Argosy readers in November 1958, again showed the reporter's tendency to identify and sympathize with U. S. military men committed

in support of the nation's foreign policy. Of that event she wrote:

> The fact is we came in big and fast and to stay if need be. In short, we did the thing which always in the past had meant on-the-spot bloodshed and too often murder and loot--and the results were friendship, negotiations and souvenir-buying.[21]

Reporting on Castro and Cuba

It was her reporting on the Cuban revolution in late 1958 and early 1959 which, up to that time, probably best portrayed her strengths and weaknesses as a reporter. Miss Chapelle was one of ten correspondents who covered the Castro rebels' activities in a two-year period before the Batista government was overthrown. Twenty-one correspondents had been invited by Castro, and ten managed to get through to complete their assignments.[22] Her first contact with the Cuban underground came through her New York grocer in March 1958. He told her if she wanted to meet some members of the "26th of July" movement, she should go to a certain coffee shop and an invitation would be delivered to her. The invitation she received was passed on to the Reader's Digest and she eventually won the assignment.[23] What she observed in Cuba touched her deeply as a woman, and ultimately exposed her to criticism because of her strong statements in support of Castro's aims and in opposition to U. S. policy and American news reporting of the

situation.*

She watched the terror tactics of Batista in attempting to put down the rebellion, mindful of what she had encountered in Hungary, and commented: "The basis of a terrorist movement is to produce fear like General Motors produces automobiles. It is purely mechanical."[24]

She studied Castro from close-up and said: "He is one of the few genuine folk heroes I have covered. To people in all of the Latin American republics, he is the image of the arch-foe of dictators."[25]

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*At the time, other reporters were criticized as being naive, irresponsible, or biased for taking similar stands. The controversy surrounding U. S. press reporting on Cuba was based primarily on the question of objectivity. Traditionally, objectivity has been regarded as one of the "greatest accomplishments of American news services during the last hundred years." (Wilbur Schramm, In Mass Communications (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 233.) Herbert Brucker maintains that the primary reason for objective reporting coming into existence was the "approach to news as news rather than as a weapon." (Freedom of Information (MacMillan Company, N. Y., 1949), p. 266.) Gradually, various publications adopted a variety of approaches to meeting the requirement for objectivity imposed on them. The Associated Press, deeply involved in the evolution of the concept since the early 1900's because of its service to a heterogeneous public, aims at reporting the news "fairly and fully," and also "explaining the news" through its members to their readers. (Editor & Publisher, November 20, 1954, p. 7.) On the other hand, certain publications, like Time Magazine, deride objectivity as impossible. Snyder and Morris, in discussing the "ideal of objectivity," commented: "Great reporting is written in the midst of stirring action, not from the vantage point of an ivory tower. Once the reporter has determined what is true by sifting the evidence and discarding the false, there is no continuing obligation on his part to remain neutral. The great reporter is a partisan for the truth. The great reporter has a social conscience. . . . Great reporters are

She reviewed the U. S. press' performance in the light of events and observed: "As an American correspondent I don't like to say it, but our own press contributed to the present impasse in our relations with Cuba. Not until the end did we take the Cuban revolution as a serious matter."[26]

Watching Castro's growing antagonism toward the United States, she concluded: "He likes to be against something big. And the U. S. is big."[27]

If Miss Chapelle's Cuban reports are to be criticized at all, it would have to be on the basis of her emotionality and possibly a lack of objectivity; but certainly not for any deficiency of style. The features she produced on Cuba were a blend of polished prose and practical reporting. Passages like the following contained a richness of language and revealed a keen eye for detail:

> Nowhere in the world does nature show a gentler face than in Cuba. The sugar cane rears itself to record heights, the orchids bloom riotously year-round, the tropical rains fall quick and warm, the sun is a ubiquitous blessing. Beneath rich earth lie much of the Western Hemisphere's strategic manganese ore and deep bodies of nickel and copper. Only an hour by air from Miami, the island is bordered by great scallops of white sand beach, sloping into the improbably blue sea.[28]

The month her Reader's Digest article appeared, Miss

---

not neutral." (A Treasury of Great Reporting, edited by Louis L. Snyder and Richard B. Morris, Second edition, Revised and Enlarged (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1949, 1962), p. xxv.)

Chapelle discussed the subject in an exchange of letters with an old friend, Marine Corps General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., then the Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, charged by the Organization of American States with the defense of the hemisphere. Of Castro, the General confided:

> He truly has a great deal of magnetism and personality and I feel sure will be a prominent figure in Latin American affairs for some time to come. . . .
>
> Frankly, I am distressed at the turn of affairs in Panama, which although Fidel denies having anything to do with, I am certain his brother, Raul, must have promoted or at least supported. If this sort of thing continues, it will cause much harm throughout Latin America and will undo all the good will Fidel has created in the U. S.[29]

Women and War

Probably one of the strongest attractions Dickey Chapelle found in Castro's cause was the presence and performance of the young women who attached themselves to the rebel force and participated in it as full members. She was inclined to be extravagant in her praise of their conduct and accomplishments. A caption she wrote for a picture she took in December 1958, entitled "Rebel Women, Oriente Province," included Celia Sanchez (Castro's girlfriend) and Velma Espin (Mrs. Raul Castro), and showed Miss Chapelle's admiration for what these women represented:

> Some of the most famous characters of fiction (of course, I'm thinking of Ingrid Bergman and "For Whom the Bell Tolls") are the women who belong to rebel warriors in the field. Here are two women who remained

> with their men through long and bloody jungle fighting --but in real life. Both today have been named as dedicated Communist supporters, but I think of them first of all as I knew them, in the role of women at the side of their men. But in that role I've heard both tell their menfolks how to run a battle.[30]

And in "Cuba: The Girl on the Steps," done for Coronet in February 1961, she wrote:

> I was never more proud to be a woman than when I marched with Fidel Castro's Cuban guerrillas. I saw members of my sex perform breathless deeds of valor--squirming through enemy roadblocks with ten grenades hooked to their belts and fighting alongside the Fidelista troops, an 11-pound rifle in their manicured hands. . . .
>
> I remember Celia Sanchez, Fidel's constant companion in the Sierra Maestra mountains. Celia could deploy soldiers and mortars like a man, yet she clung to her femininity. She even designed her own field uniform: green twill tapered slacks and a V-necked over-blouse.[31]

Anyone close to Dickey Chapelle could see the resemblance between the Cuban rebel women and the reporter herself. They exemplified many of the things she valued most. She described them as spirited, brave, resourceful, dedicated, patriotic, and idealistic; displaying qualities of leadership and a determination to be treated as equals even to the extent of claiming their share of danger. Her characterization of them as romantics, deadly serious about their goals, was slightly melodramatic, and probably represented more of a personal appraisal than a professional evaluation.

Cuba Under Castro

Months later, seeking an opportunity to cover Cuba in the post revolution period, Miss Chapelle wrote a Cuban official requesting assistance. She enclosed a list of Cuban leaders she wished to interview. Dr. Castro's name was at the top of the letter, which read in part:

> . . . There is much false reporting--or rather reporting of speculation instead of fact--about the current crisis. I can only be useful in contradicting it if I may have access to the military sources before --not after--the crisis is ended so I can again tell my readers in both North and South America that I saw the truth just as you enabled me to see it when it was Batista's censorship we were fighting against.[32] (Italics hers)

She entered Cuba to see for herself; but enjoyed less cooperation and freedom than on her previous visit. Her report for the Reader's Digest reflected a change of view, especially about Castro himself. It read in part:

> Last fall I watched one of his /Castro's/ numerous TV appearances from inside the studio. . . . Here was the actual flesh and blood government of Cuba at work. . . . Here, too, was the emotional tone of Castro's old military headquarters, the same sort of harangue, hysteria and hypnosis I remembered so well. Only here the walls of Castro's shelter were the lights for the television cameras. Where rock cave walls had once isolated him from danger, now the curtains of brilliant light seemed to isolate him from reality.[33]

A concluding paragraph was stricken by the Digest editors, perhaps because its words represented too strong a stand for the conservative magazine. It said:

> As a reporter, I see one of the crying needs of our world men who--like Castro--are unable to take a backward step on a course they believe in. So it is sad, terribly sad to report that the path on which he leads Cuba is not one alongside the Yankee way.[34]

On two other occasions, the Reader's Digest demonstrated a marked timidity in publishing Chapelle material which might involve it in controversial issues. In 1962, Miss Chapelle was paid $1,000 for a story on the U. S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and its reported use as a refuge for Cubans fleeing the Castro government. The feature was pigeon-holed. The year before, another "sensitive" story, entitled "The Men Who Didn't Give Up Laos," was financed by the Digest but never published in the magazine. The correspondent had produced 1,000 photographs of activity on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos but had lost all but 200, "missing in Department of Defense censorship." On April 1, 1963, she offered the story to True Magazine in a letter to its editor, Douglas Kennedy. In it Miss Chapelle called her article an expose that would show how U. S. fighting men had been robbed of recognition by a "dishonorable American diplomatic policy."

Her Personal Involvement

Her continuing preoccupation with developments in Cuba involved her personally with the police on one occasion, and nearly cost her her life on another.

The Miami News of September 22, 1963, carried a front-page story to the effect that Metropolitan police and U. S. Customs agents had raided the Hialeah, Florida, headquarters of an exile commando unit the night before and

found the building loaded with home-made bombs and explosive materials. A woman identified as Georgette Meyer, 44, a free lance photographer and writer, was at the house with three Cuban exiles identified as members of the anti-Castro commando group. Miss Chapelle had made her house available to the group and had even stocked her refrigerator with chemical explosives. The incident was featured nationwide in the news.

The same newspaper carried an item in its January 6, 1964, edition, headlined "Writer Hurt as Fiery Boat Sinks." Dickey Chapelle had narrowly escaped death as the 22-foot inboard-outboard boat she used to photograph Cubans escaping from Cuba exploded and sank fifteen miles off Miami. She suffered severe burns of the face and hands in the accident, which was caused by a leaky gasoline drum. When queried about the incident by the Milwaukee Sentinel, she commented: "I'm sorry to offend the journalistic tradition for not going through a wall of flame to get my camera but it isn't much of a story." Her cameras, valued at $1,650, were lost with the boat.[35]

Shortly thereafter, she launched a campaign to focus attention on what she felt were serious errors of judgment being practiced by U. S. government officials relative to Cuban refugees. She alerted several leading newsmen to "an important story," and in the following letter explained her position in asking their support to publicize it:

> The news story involved is the treatment by the U.S. of the action groups among the anti-Red Cuban exiles in Miami. My point of view is that of a reporter who has lived for eight months among them. My conclusion is that this story has a wide significance because: (1) the group's will-to-fight-communism is being broken systematically by the U.S.--to the denigration of free world capability against the Reds; (2) the destruction of their freedom fighter element among us has led to the creation of an anti-U.S. underground; (3) the employment of secret police methods to achieve this destruction is so widely at variance with American tradition as to demand full press exposure.[36] (Italics hers)

Author and Stylist

In 1960, Dickey Chapelle began writing her autobiography. Her original choice of title was "The Trouble I've Asked For." The book was published in January 1962 under the title "What's A Woman Doing Here?" It was the largest single piece of writing Miss Chapelle had ever done. Generally speaking, it entailed a recapitulation of the more important assignments she had completed. The greatest emphasis was on her Hungarian imprisonment and the considerable influence the experience had on her professional and personal life. She had not made her first visit to Vietnam at that time. The literary success of the book, as well as the fact that she was a frequent contributor to prestige publications, often put her in the critic's position when friends wished to have their own works evaluated. One such experience offers an insight into the "Chapelle approach" to writing. The occasion was a critique of a magazine script sent her by an Army lieutenant. It dealt

with another Army officer whom both knew and admired.

The big trouble is that a story as you and I see the man /Major Millett/ will not make the reader feel very good. Put it this way: what he does for you (and may Heaven laugh at me, for me!) is to remind you that you haven't done enough fast enough, haven't tried hard enough and can damn well do more than you've ever done before. But it isn't abstract. He then gives you the chance to try. Your response to him is not frustrated but lived out right on the spot. Now the reader can sense that same challenge in reading about him, and can even want desperately to respond to it. But he can't. Except for a tiny handful of readers, most are armchair-bound, and worse yet, bound in thinking to a most unaudacious pattern. So how do they react? They wriggle around, they are vaguely uncomfortable, they have been made to feel by reading your piece almost as effete as they jolly well may really be. So they take it out on you, the author, usually by simply doubting you. And editors know they take it out on the magazine by not buying it again.

Well, then, how can you tell a story of a hero without the frontal approach of saying accurately that he is one? There's a theory that it can be done by a kind of flanking job.

For a general audience, you take the basic assumption that the reader really wants and would enjoy knowing in print what the psychologists call a "father-image." You describe him in terms that the reader would identify not with himself (this is where it could hurt) but with his own bosses, leaders, heroes, gods. And then you show the hero's effect on other people. (You started to do this several times in your draft. One I like is the anecdote re the patrol in Italy--page 3--where you tell of the two men who came with him.) You explain what the heor /sic/ does largely in its relationship to what he thereby gets other people to do.

The end product of this logic in narrative is to give full vent to the reader's dreams that he is doing what he is only reading about (your real professional objective as a writer) without any inhibition from the fact that he never did it. He can say to himself, "But I would have--if I'd had that man's leadership." This makes him feel good, he believes you and he buys the magazine next month too.

I'm glad I explained that so clearly. Now if I could only do it myself--

What started me off on this kick is that I'm trying to caution you against the direct tribute in writing about Millett. This I think is just about the major fault I find in your MS, but I'll nit-pick once more. I want more plain-language details. Again, see page 3. If three machine guns tried to take three men, and after a little while only one of the guns was still functioning while all three of the men were, I darn near want a diagram of the phrase "they eliminated by fire two of the positions." I can imagine several patterns of terrain and events by which it could be done, but none is convincing if I have to think of one myself. I want the author to do it for me. To illustrate personally. I was once fired on from 20 yards in clear flare-light by a sub-machine gun and the guy missed clean over to my right. It's a dramatic part of a story I tell in many of my lectures but I stopped telling it because I honestly can't satisfy my own curiousity /sic/ or anyone else's on howinhell /sic/ he happened to do a thing like that. And I know it leaves the listener simply with an inexplicable, an unhappy outcome.[37] (Italics hers)

Writing did not always come effortlessly to Miss Chapelle. When she was in the middle of her book, she wrote a Reader's Digest editor of her progress, at the same time making a joke at her own expense:

I guess I've hit a sticking-point. Sometimes the copy comes hard and at others it's like buttermilk gurgling out of a jug (was it Mark Twain who said that first?)--but a wide-mouthed one.[38]

When her Aunt Louise asked why she did not concentrate more on books or try writing a novel, she replied:

The reason I haven't tried writing a novel is simple--no imagination. The intellectual feat of imagining a person and what happens to them /sic/ is incomparably harder than following real people to see what happens to them, even if you have to do the latter on the end of a parachute.[39] (Italics hers)

The Reporter and the Risks

On occasion, Miss Chapelle showed her indignation at the manner in which certain publications treated her, despite her excellent performance in their behalf. She let her feelings surface in a letter to her photo-agent in 1962. The comments are extraordinary for the methods they reveal as "accepted practices" employed by leading pictorial publications in dealing with reporters and photographers.

> Now about why my pix, although taken at greater risk and effort than other people's, don't sell as readily. I'M /sic/ pretty sure the answer is too simple to be material to the Saturday Review. The answer is in part personal. Notice that our one good sale was to a life-long personal friend of yours, and no matter how hard we tried, we got no place with strangers. In short, Rick bought from me because he trusts you.
>
> Neither LIFE nor LOOK in the more than ten years I've tried to do business with them has ever said or done anything indicating that they trust me (with the single exception of the time LIFE sent me to cover what they considered a second-rate news event at the time, the Hungarian refugees crossing into Austria, and then it was frankly a suicide mission--see below--on which they didn't want to expend a good photographer).
>
> LOOK has always treated me cavalierly no matter who was involved. The pattern with LOOK is always as you saw it--the enthusiastic bite on the first contact, then a time of checking, then a kind of discourtesy and doubt as your Mr. Morison displayed--that is, a barely hidden challenge to me to prove I'm not a liar and that my pix aren't phonies acquired by some boudoir legerdemaine from a man who really took them. The whole thing is easy to explain if you remember that the brilliant Mr. Mich is a cripple who has always remembered how the War Ddpartment /sic/ in World War II accredited a woman for him after he predicted they would never do so--and then turned down his services because of his limp. (They were nuts; he'd make a better fighter than half the men on earth.)

As to LIFE, you must not forget that the biggies are still trying to deny that I ever worked for them. They told THE DIGEST last December that I had never been a stringer for them in Hungary, and I had to produce their own check-stub from November 14, 1956, marked ADVANCE FOR COVERAGE OF HUNGARIAN REFUGEES, to square myself with THE DIGEST editors--no, the editors didn't question me but the research department quite properly did.

Why does LIFE do this? Because they said they would and at the time I agreed to it. Gene Farmer promised me if I got into trouble on the Hungarian refugee coverage he would disown me, and he's just doing it because he thinks he has to do it to cover other LIFE people who may get into hot water with Communist secret police. I am convinced their practice is shameful, appeasing and one of the most reprehensible and dangerous practices for journalists I can imagine. BUT MISTER LUCE THINKS IT'S NECESSARY. Anyhow, the miasma of this difference in his and my approach to terrorist secret police still does shadow my name around LIFE.

Well, what do we do about it?

Just what we are doing, only more so. The Times so-splendid review of my book, THE DIGEST'S incredible blurb indicating trust of me, The Times Magazine's use of my pix--these are the only real ways to fight my battle, I'm sure. The one thing I know you can do is to see that every major editor's indication of trust in my integrity does come to the attention of LIFE and LOOK, the more dramatically the better. If someday I do win some recognition from my colleagues, say an Overseas Press Club award, we may get the stupid problem solved. Anyhow, I'm not quitting. (I have submitted the stories of mine involving jumping as a reporter with fighting troops but I don't have much hope that I submitted the right stuff to the right contest at the right time, etc.)

All of this, incidentally, is an excellent reason why you may not want to agent me. I hope you will go on, though.[40] (Italics hers)

While there are few publications that pay better than the Reader's Digest, National Geographic, Life, and Look, they provide the free-lance foreign correspondent with relatively little financial protection when

representing them in the field. The dangers are guaranteed; the insurance coverage is not. As an example, when Dickey Chapelle embarked on her second visit to Vietnam in May 1962, her contract with the National Geographic read:

> You will receive a minimum of $3,000, plus expenses, for a satisfactory series of color photographs and a text of approximately 4,000 words on South Vietnam. If the material proves satisfactory you will be paid $2,500 for the manuscript and a minimum of $150 per page of color and $75 per page of black and white. The minimum guarantee will be paid upon completion of the assignment. You will be working against a deadline of early July for both pictures and text.
>
> Acceptance of financial and other considerations outlined in this letter shall constitute an absolute release to the National Geographic Society of all responsibility for personal injury, and/or death, which may arise out of or result from this assignment.*41

Vietnam: A New Front

After her first visit to South Vietnam in 1961-62, when she worked with the Vietnamese airborne troops and accompanied Father Nguyen Lac Hoa and his "Sea Swallow" forces in operations around their Mekong Delta village, Dickey Chapelle had established a deep personal commitment to the Vietnamese people. She was a frequent companion on

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*A letter to the reporter from Mr. Joseph B. Roberts, Assistant Director of Photography, written on June 1, 1962, indicates that the magazine was able to procure a "special risk group" life insurance policy covering the reporter for a 30-day period. The principal sum was $10,000 with additional medical expenses of $1,000, for a premium of $175.00. As far as can be determined, Miss Chapelle paid the premium. When Dickey Chapelle was killed in Vietnam in 1965, she had no life insurance coverage.

"Sea Swallow" foot patrols in the Delta and often followed them as they waded waist-deep over the inundated rice lands. She proudly described one outing when she made "21 such fordings in total darkness in four hours."[42]

Her next visit, in May and June 1962, was directed at covering the "helicopter story" for National Geographic. It represented something of a departure for the magazine and inspired both praise and criticism from its readers.

One letter described the flushing out of communists by helicopter as "particularly degrading and brutal." "The hunting and capturing of Human Beings is presented as a game of fun as if animals were being run down and gunned. . . . ," it stated.[43]

Another reader complimented the magazine on the story and praised it as "more up-to-date, attractive, and interesting."[44]

A color photo taken on that assignment, and later printed "king-size," was displayed at the U. S. Air Force Academy. It demonstrated vividly the correspondent's resourcefulness. The picture was achieved with the aid of a helicopter whose motor faltered, thereby permitting Miss Chapelle to make a vibration-free exposure with her Leica camera.[45]

The National Geographic offered Miss Chapelle an assignment in Cambodia during the latter months of 1962 and for perhaps the first time in her professional life, she

refused to do a story. She reasoned:

> Viet Nam during these months is to be the place of decisive testing of the single U. S. war tactic actually in use--our military adviser system--against shooting communists. I'm afraid the emotional pull on me toward that story would prejudice the results of any comprehensive general assignment in Cambodia.[46]

She held out for a Vietnam story and the result was a seven-page feature on Father Hoa's Chinese-Vietnamese "Sea Swallows," which appeared in the Reader's Digest in July 1963. She depicted the "Fighting Priest of South Vietnam" as a benign leader who combined the best of two professions, soldiering and the priesthood. A close friend, Colonel Bernard Yoh,* who had worked as a liaison between Father Hoa and the South Vietnam government, read the story manuscript shortly before its puclication and responded:

> I can imagine what Father will think when he reads the soft words that you put in his mouth. The only words I have ever heard him address to his men were: "You pig head," "Son of a dog," "Thing of a dog," etc. But I guess "my son and my daughter" stuff goes better with American readers.[47]

Teamwork at National Geographic

Miss Chapelle returned to South Vietnam for two months in September 1964. She went to get the story of the

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*The Chapelle Papers, Box 7, indicate that Colonel Yoh was a Chinese officer who directed the escape and evasion net serving U. S. fliers shot down in China during World War II. He was later employed by the U. S. government in South Vietnam.

Vietnamese Navy's River Assault Groups and their U. S. Navy advisers for the National Geographic. It was a complicated story and her manuscript submitted to her editors was received enthusiastically. An editor's memorandum reflects some of the story weaknesses and certain deficiencies in the writer, too. It was dated February 1, 1965, and began:

Re: Water War in Viet Nam by Dickey Chapelle

Dear Allan:

Dickey, as heretofore, has come up with a whopping good battle yarn. I unhesitatingly endorse this as a story we should run. It is very exciting and a scoop. This is not the sort of thing you read in the daily papers. Dickey told me she thought it might seem repetitious, but I do not find it so.

However . . . this, as Dickey told me before turning it in, is only a hasty second draft--and it is full of many small holes that must be plugged: careless disregard of important details, lack of big-picture background, sloppy sentences (the last quite minor and easily fixable here). But with Dickey on the road, on a lecture tour, I think we should give ourselves a week to ten days to work out the editing.

There are two big things missing, and on each Dickey must write a paragraph or two at the right point--preferably early in the story.

Namely: (1) This "single adviser team of 42 Americans" mentioned on page 1--who are these people, and what is the name of the organization? Are these all members of the U. S. Army Special Forces, not mentioned till page 18? In any case, what is the particular mission of this group that distinguishes it from the activities of the other 23,000 Americans in South Viet Nam? Is this entire piece about activities of the U. S. Army Special Forces--or are other American groups involved? Dickey never makes that clear.

(2) What is the relation of all this to the big war in Viet Nam? Dickey needs to write a paragraph, around page 2 or 3, giving us a quick rundown on the overall war situation at that time; that at this point the Viet

Cong seemed to be winning, that the government of South Viet Nam was in a worse than usual turmoil with no one knowing whether Khanh or the civilians would triumph, that the American advisers were just trying to get the job done nonetheless, etc.

I think the best way to start repairing this is to take the holes page by page and ask Dickey to fill them. They are each small and can be fixed out of Dickey's knowledge (some even out of what we learn from captions) quite simply--but overall they add up to a major shortcoming that must be rectified. I am going to give these in some detail because, if you agree, they can be passed along to Dickey in this same form.

/Detailed changes were suggested in a page by page review; and the memo ended with the following comment./

As you can see, this long memo is just to clarify a series of puzzling details. But basically this is a solid piece.

I'll be happy to follow this project through if you wish, as soon as I have your reaction to these suggestions. Dickey and I worked well together before on her South Vietnamese paratroop story.

Incidentally, might we consider running this with Bernard Fall's North Viet Nam story? They'd make good companion pieces, and North Viet Nam is now hot in the news with the Russian Premier's projected visit.

I attach Dickey's manuscript, her caption sheet, and her itinerary. Though I've read the captions, I'll also ask to see the pictures if I am to edit.[48]

The manuscript was returned to the correspondent for revision and reduction to 10,000 words. On February 16, a note to Dickey Chapelle from her editor said:

A million thanks for a most responsive and professional job of revision and also for meeting your deadline so scrupulously. It is no cliché when I say it is a pleasure to work with you.[49]

The lengthy story was published a full year later, and covered twenty-five magazine pages. It included about

sixteen pages of colored photographs. Miss Chapelle was paid $5,800 for the feature ($2,500 for the manuscript, $3,300 for the photographs).[50]

Reporting for the National Observer

A series of articles written for the National Observer was published in October and November 1965. It focused on the U. S. Marine Corps. Two were produced in the United States and dealt with Marine recruit training and the family life of Marines preparing to go to Vietnam. A third, done on Okinawa, described the Marines' "rehearsal for war." A fourth, from Vietnam, appeared in the November 8 issue and reported on what Dickey Chapelle called the "characteristic Marine operation here, the search-and-clear effort." She had been killed four days before Observer readers read her account of a Marine patrol on Operation "Red Snapper" engaged in the "grinding bull labor" of fighting in Vietnam.[51] The feature, "Searching Vietnam for Victor Charlie," was Dickey Chapelle at her best, probably because she was doing what she liked best. She was in combat with the U. S. Marines.

Excerpts from the story demonstrate the singleness of purpose and disregard for personal safety so characteristic of the correspondent in getting her story. The language was intimate, even conversational, in tone. It captured the mood of the patrol with hints of anxiety,

anticipation, and the mystery of the unknown. There was an easy rhythm, almost a cadence, which seemed to match the progress of the men as they followed the rugged terrain in a futile search for the enemy. An historical reference to the French was a reminder, though probably not intended, of the repetitive and frustrating nature of the war in Vietnam. The profile of the Marine sergeant as a symbol of the American professional fighting man, was a testimony to the author's deep and abiding faith in him. It began:

> . . . Like most Americans, I had often read the casual phrase, "search and clear" mission in Vietnam, usually with a notation that a few VC had been killed or captured and that U.S. casualties were light. Now I wanted to see what the words meant. . . .
>
> But search-and-clear operations in a hither-to known enemy area like the one toward which Red Snapper was aimed offered a higher chance of seeing action.
>
> The best chance of all should be with the platoon farthest from the center of the line, so I planned to try to cover that unit once I was out in the field. If I could find it. If it would put up with this reporter.
>
> . . . It was almost exactly where we were going that the ill-fated French Groupement Mobile 100, a force of about the same size doing this same thing a decade ago, were massacred almost to a man by the same enemy.
>
> . . . They say nothing that can happen in the field shakes up a professional Marine sergeant, and the idea that his outfit would suddenly include a middle-aged woman reporter did not furrow the sergeant's brow.
>
> . . . So that night just after the sun went down, behind him as the 16th person in the line of 51 under his command, I began the first combat patrol I had seen in Vietnam with American troops. Covering Vietnamese forces beginning in 1961, I had made a score of similar patrols. But, I suspected this one, with U. S. professionals, would be different.

. . . In a faint starlight, with the final sunrise glow a purple stain beside rain clouds, our orders came over the radio.

. . . We rise to our feet, slip packs on our shoulders, check out belts to be sure we have left nothing behind. I start to study intently the silhouettes of the men beside me and behind me, and of course the shadow of Sergeant Benz' helmeted head and laden shoulders. . . . And I try to start to listen hard. For it is sound, not sight, that will reassure me in the darkness. . . . These sounds and silhouettes will guide me to stay within the protection of the patrol as much as I can even if its formation shifts lightning-fast.

. . . A minute before, we were still separate individuals. Now, as a night patrol on suspect earth, we are something more. It is an entity committed to steady movement across space. We cannot go quickly, and yet we have become inexorable as an organism on one course with one will. . . .

. . . As long as I can half-see, half-sense the sergeant in front of me, I walk in faith; if there are bogey men, they cannot frighten me in this company or in this place.

. . . A dozen times Sergeant Benz or his radioman or his corpsman remember how much less sure of foot I am than they, and a firm pale hand is extended to me so that I do not fall but once. Part of the time I move on my hands and knees (and later realize I need not have been ashamed of that because they--though less often than I--move that way too).

. . . The sweet relief to our leg muscles of flat sand under our boots does come at last though. When perhaps half of us are done with the hellish descent, I draw a deep breath and try to hide its shudder.

But before I can control it, I stop breathing entirely. I know no one near me is breathing either. We have all heard the same sounds.

You could say it is only one bird calling another, and the second answering. But--all of us have been taught better than that. We know that there is in Vietnam no bird with either the bobolink call of the first nor the pigeon-coo of the second. We know, too,

that Marines (other friendly troops, that is) don't use bird calls for signals.

But the Viet Cong do.

So we now know that we are being watched by at least two (we later learned it was four) enemy scouts.

. . . The river fording was cold. As we paced out and the water came up over our hips, it chilled and shocked. For me--five feet four inches tall--the surface at last cut across the upper pockets of my Marine utility jacket. . . .

A little beach crossing brought us to the long wading walk through the breaching surf to the sand bar, then through the pushing swell to the ramp of the landing craft. She was the medium-sized type called an LCU, familiar from the yeomen service on every foreign shore with Marines and hence almost as reassuring as the Stars and Stripes flying from her stern. I pulled myself up her inclined ramp from the water with the feeling of having come home. And there was hot coffee and dry cigarettes for all of us.

But of course we hadn't boarded her to come home but just to get across the bay so we could search and clear that area of Viet Cong.

. . . Perhaps the professionalism his story implies will be the final factor in tipping the scales over even the near fanatic Viet Cong. Like many of his enemies and relatively few Americans, Sergeant Benz has never been anything but a fighting man. . . .

In short, the trained will and the trained voice that had controlled the platoon of us through rock climbs and fordings and wet nights and disappointments were the product of literally years of hard work learning how.

. . . "My Marines are like other Marines in Vietnam --mature," he said. "You give them some place to go--they don't complain, they just pick up their rifles and go. And they don't just make it--they win."[52]

An Editor's Observations

After her death, National Observer editor William

Giles added his words of tribute to the many others paid Miss Chapelle. In reviewing her career he wrote:

> I do not know how the mutual romance and respect between Dickey Chapelle from Milwaukee and the American fighting man first began or what impelled her to travel all over this globe to be where he was and take part in what he was doing. I just know that it was genuine--aboard the hospital ship anchored off Iwo Jima, in the muck of Korea, in the jungles of Vietnam. She was there by choice, an aggressive, insistent choice. Perhaps she had to be because, basically, she was a news reporter covering what she knew to be the most compelling news stories of our time.
>
> Dickey began as a photographer, and her work over the years testifies to the fine, sensitive eye she had for the art. More remarkable, though, to an editor's mind, was the fact that she possessed equal brilliance in telling a story in words, dramatically and persuasively. She had the rare gift of articulating what we call the "feel" of a story. With her, I suspect, it came easy because she had a natural feel for people and events.
>
> Because she was so good, and because she was a woman in a trade that men like to think they dominate, Dickey Chapelle bred a certain amount of resentment among some of her male competitors. Try as she might, Dickey could never fully dissipate the natural emotions of admiration and jealousy. If she were less than the best, she probably could not have survived the criticism that her work sometimes evoked.
>
> But Dickey was a professional, and if she was aware of the occasional sniping she never let it dim her spirit.
>
> Spirit Dickey had. . . .
>
> . . . Dickey always lugged her own, asking and wanting no help from anybody, determined only to be treated as an equal.
>
> The truth is, Dickey was superior to a lot of people she treated as equals. If occasionally she flaunted that superiority, I choose to believe that it was unintentional. . . .[53]

She Talks To America

As much a part of her life's work as any story she ever wrote were the lecture tours she conducted beginning in 1958. She drove throughout the mid-West and Eastern United States telling women's groups and students of her experiences.

Standing before a speaker's table, decorated with a speed graphic camera and blue flash bulbs nested in arrangements of flowers, she would begin by telling the ladies, "This is not going to be white glove type of entertainment."[54] Her talks, frequently described in newspaper accounts as "spine-chilling," usually ended an hour later.[55] She spoke without notes because, as she said, "If my own feelings aren't strong enough to communicate what I've seen and how I feel, I shouldn't be talking."[56]

Her schedule generally was tight. She was up at 6:30 a.m., would usually talk around 9:00 a.m., again at noon, and perhaps in the middle of the afternoon or evening. She liked to joke about the towns and the pay. She preferred "little town hotels," which she defined as those having knotted rope hanging out of the windows of her room to serve as fire escapes.[57] To her friends she wrote: "I was on a recent story-telling stint (if I got more money, we'd call it a 'lecture tour')."[58] Actually the pay was quite good. An agency booked her tours through the

University of Minnesota Program Service. By 1960 she was paid $100 to $200 a lecture, depending on audience size, hour, and other factors.[59] She kept seventy per cent of the fee and her agent got the rest. Out of this she paid her travel expenses. In 1962 and 1963 she received $300 a week for an eight to eleven-week tour, and spoke less frequently.[60] However, there are indications that her agency experienced financial difficulties which affected payment to Miss Chapelle.

When Dickey Chapelle died in 1965, all that remained with which to measure success, after twenty-seven years of work as a professional photographer-journalist, was a checking account balance of thirty cents.*[61]

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*Her savings account held $7,500, which was her share of the sale of her family home. In addition, she had $10,000 worth of jewelry given her by her former husband, Tony Chapelle.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]Tony Chapelle interview with author in New York City, April 17, 1968.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]List of Photo Captions for 1945 in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[4]Biographical Data, March 19, 1963, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[5]Dickey Chapelle, *What's A Woman Doing Here?* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962), p. 130.

[6]Letter to John Kavanaugh, December 15, 1947, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[7]Memorandum from Sarah Splint to John Kavanaugh, February 12, 1948, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[8]Memorandum from Sarah Splint to John Kavanaugh, April 8, 1948, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[9]The *National Geographic* Magazine, April 1953, p. 545.

[10]The *Saturday Evening Post*, December 26, 1953, pp. 13 and 48.

[11]Letter from Tony Chapelle, Thanksgiving Day (November), 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[12]Letter from Tony Chapelle, January 29, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[13]Letter from Dickey Chapelle to Paul, March 6, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[14]The Marquette (Michigan) *Tribune*, March 19, 1965.

[15]The Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) *Daily News*, September 9, 1957.

[16]*Ibid.*

[17]Chapelle, *What's A Woman Doing Here?*, p. 240.

[18]The Reader's Digest, June 1958, p. 62.

[19]Ibid., p. 66.

[20]Letter to family, December 28, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[21]Argosy, November 1958, p. 95.

[22]Lecture to the Thomas Jefferson's Woman's Club, Richmond, Indiana, February 1959.

[23]The Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Journal, April 17, 1959.

[24]The Pompton Lakes (New Jersey) Cardinal, February 1959.

[25]The Davenport (Iowa) Morning Democrat, April 10, 1959.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]The Reader's Digest, April 1959.

[29]Letter from General Lemuel C. Shepherd, April 29, 1950, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[30]Photograph caption, December 1958 in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[31]Coronet Magazine, February 1961, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[32]Memorandum from D. Chapelle to Dr. Franqui, August 13, 1959, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[33]The Reader's Digest, January 1960, p. 74.

[34]Manuscript, January 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Series 3.

[35]The Miami (Florida) News, January 6, 1964.

[36]Letter to Joseph Newman, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[37]Letter to Lieutenant A. C. Lyon, Jr., March 5, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[38]Letter to Reader's Digest editor, August 1, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[39]Letter to Aunt Louise (Lutie), February 7, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[40]Letter to Nancy Palmer, February 25, 1968, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[41]Letter from Joseph B. Roberts, National Geographic, May 25, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[42]Photo Caption Data, October 9, 1962, and November 2, 1961, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[43]Letter to the editor, National Geographic, November 23, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[44]Letter to the editor, National Geographic, November 26, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[45]Letter from Leica Company, January 30, 1963, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[46]Letter to Herbert S. Wilburn, Jr., National Geographic, September 26, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[47]Letter to D. Chapelle from Bernard Yoh, March 9, 1963, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[48]National Geographic Memorandum from Mr. J. Cerruti, February 1, 1965, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[49]Letter from Assistant Editor, National Geographic Magazine, February 16, 1965, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[50]Letter to D. Chapelle from H. S. Wilburn, Jr., March 16, 1965, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[51]National Observer, November 8, 1965 (Author's Note), p. 1.

[52]National Observer, November 8, 1965, p. 1.

[53]National Observer, November 8, 1965, p. 22.

[54]The Alliance (Ohio) Review, February 22, 1964.

[55]Sioux City (Iowa) Sunday Journal, February 7, 1965.

[56]Louisville (Kentucky) Courier-Journal, February 6, 1965.

[57]Letter to a friend (Steve), March 22, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[58]Letter to a friend, March 5, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[59]Letter to a friend (Ron), March 6, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[60]University of Minnesota Program Services Memorandum of Agreement, January 21, 1963, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[61]Tony Chapelle interview with author in New York City, April 17, 1968.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPORTER AND THE MILITARY

Dickey Chapelle was a military writer. Because the great majority of her assignments involved working with the military information system and with military information officers, a close look into this relationship seems particularly pertinent.

Of considerable significance, too, is the underlying question of how her military relationships affected her work. Obviously, she relied on the military for support and services; but what did she give in return? Was she able to maintain her detachment in the interest of objectivity, or did she succumb to military efforts, sometimes extraordinary, to "help" her get her story?

Miss Chapelle's fondness for the military atmosphere and its associated stories is easily apparent in her published work and private correspondence. Information officers were among her closest friends. Acquaintanceships arising out of assignments developed into lifelong friendships. Ties with individual military men, some even service chiefs, grew stronger with the years. It can be said with a fair degree of certainty that the military, as a group, mourned her death longest and felt her loss deepest.

A Marine Corps major described the reaction to her death when the news was relayed to Corps Headquarters in Washington from Vietnam: "Everything came to a halt," he said. "The air was heavy with sadness." "It was as though the Corps had sustained a major setback or suffered an irreparable loss."[1] In fact, it had lost a good friend. The other armed forces shared in the loss as well.

The story of how this relationship was established and developed as it did is really a scenario of Dickey Chapelle as a foreign correspondent.

World War II and Accreditation

As a novice in World War II, she worked under strict censorship. In almost every assignment thereafter, whether with U. S. or foreign forces, she encountered censorship in some shape or form. Consequently, her reaction, publicly and in private, to the frustrations inherent in dealings with the military information system are of fundamental importance.

Accreditation is the passport to the story for a war correspondent. To lose accreditation is to be unemployed; especially if you are a free lance journalist, as was Dickey Chapelle.

The incident previously described, which cost her accreditation in the Pacific during World War II, taught her a valuable lesson early in her career. She was already

being returned to the United States from Guam when her husband Tony received the following communication from a Navy public relations officer:

> . . . I regret to inform you that the credentials as a War Correspondent of your wife, Dickey Meyer Chapelle, were revoked because she failed to comply with specific orders and regulations regarding her movements in this area. Specifically, she was permitted to go to Okinawa on a hospital ship, with the expressed understanding and direct orders that she not disembark while in that area. In contravention of the above, she did so disembark and caused a great deal of embarrassment to several responsible officers in the area. . . .[2]

She seemed to survive the incident with a minimum of resentment toward the service which retarded her professional progress.

In her autobiography, What's a Woman Doing Here?, she addressed the subject of accreditation as part of the system she knew in World War II:

> This accreditation business is of the greatest importance in wartime to a reporter or a photographer. It's not enlistment. The correspondent goes right on being paid by his publication. But the service--Army, Navy, Air Force--agrees to see that the correspondent is housed, fed, uniformed, transported and shown whatever is necessary. The services give this cooperation so the correspondent will at least be able to write stories useful to the prosecution of the war as well as satisfying to her editors. . . . In return for adopting him or her, the military forces ask one commitment from the correspondent. The reporter agrees in writing to take orders. The custom is to treat a correspondent as a kind of junior officer, calling the status he doesn't legally have a simulated rank. In 1945, we were simulated captains in the Army and lieutenant commanders in the Navy.[3]

The Navy "agreement" under which she worked in 1945 put the commitment in first person language. It stated,

in part:

> . . . It is understood that this /agreement/ includes the submission for purposes of censorship of all written or photographic materials, either private correspondence or intended for publication or release, while with the Navy or after my return, if the interviews, written matter or photography are based on my observations made during the period or pertain to the places visited under this authority. I agree to observe the same rules and ethics in regard to transmission of information as service personnel.[4]

Very little of what Dickey Chapelle wrote during World War II was published. She had considerably more success selling her photographs. Her primary job in the Pacific was to inspire blood donor support for the "Whole Blood Program" in the United States. Life Magazine published some of her photographs taken of wounded Marines during the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. But her conflict with the military and subsequent loss of accreditation stymied her efforts. However, she held no grudge, and a passage from her autobiography, written in retrospect, reveals her sympathetic attitude toward the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps, as well as their tactics in the Pacific "island hopping campaign." The appraisal, written in 1962, reflects a keen, analytical mind as well as complete acceptance of the "nuclear age" amphibious tactical concept:

> . . . Looking back on the battle /Iwo Jima/ now, I know we were watching something of long range significance. It was here that the amphibious capability of American assault forces at last came of age. Not till Iwo was there an accepted doctrine to solve final

> tactical problems, especially the timing of naval bombardment and the geometry of landing waves. What was proved in blood on the island, is the fashion in which we today know our country's forces large or small can move ashore anywhere, any time, under any conditions including nuclear counter-fire.[5]

The last phrase might have come directly from a U. S. Navy amphibious warfare handbook, or from a Navy Public Information Officer's release. The thing that gives the passage weight is the fact that Dickey Chapelle in her quarter century of reporting observed the technique from first hand, under combat and peaceful conditions, in scattered points throughout the world. Obviously, she believed in its efficacy.

The Reporter in Peacetime

Miss Chapelle's first peacetime assignment with the military began with an exchange of letters in 1955 with Major General John MacQueen, an old friend from her days on Okinawa. MacQueen was then Commanding Officer of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California.

In answer to queries about Marine "esprit de corps" posed by the reporter in an earlier letter, MacQueen wrote:

> This esprit has been put to every test under every condition and has never faltered. To a civilian, this great pride might be comprised of patriotism or loyalty or self-sacrifice, or possibly a combination of all these things. We Marines feel it is even more. At the same time, the American people are not for the most part accustomed to the firm discipline which we develop in each recruit in his basic training. Although history testifies to the effectiveness of this

discipline, particularly under battle conditions, it remains in disfavor with many who do not understand it.[6]

On the "disfavor toward discipline," she replied:

> This is the kind of problem into which I personally would like to see more observers--writers, photographers and so on--bite deeply right now. In this case, of course, I'll be guided by the extent to which you feel this is true. But my own hunch is that at this time both the country and the Corps might find some patient, plain speech interpretation on this issue as interesting as it is useful. I say "the Corps," too, because I'd like to see the Marines get further public credit for their training accomplishment.[7]

The result was an invitation to cover boot training "as no reporter man or woman has ever seen it, by actually pacing alongside a drill instructor not for a few hours but for a few weeks."[8]

This episode offered an opportunity for the reporter to do some "soul searching" in her first real postwar experience with the give and take of media-military relations. A nine-page letter to her mother provides a rare insight into her mental processes and at the same time reveals a deep empathy for the Marines which lasted to the day she died. She wrote:

> When I came to the Marines two weeks ago Monday, you remember my own attitude was a kind of lonely one; that is, I knew a story I wanted to do. I had watched them fight ten years ago and like everyone else who sees them, I had asked myself in awe--how do they get men to fight like this? I'm not talking about the military operation for the sake of the real estate so gained, or even the fact of "victory." I mean something more fundamental. How do you get human beings, with all their fears and frailties, to team up in a single concerted effort, so simple and so limitlessly hazardous, until finally they are one moving inexorable force?

I was simply looking at a Marine division in the field as an example of a human endeavor that worked--and the older I get the fewer of these I see. And so the story I wanted to do was this one. Sure, it had a news angle; military service as such is one of the most widely dreaded experiences of young people in America, and I thought it might be interesting to take a good look at it and see if I could come up with some helpful answers about why we dreaded it so. (Goodness knows--it is not because America is such a non-violent people; we and Russia are the only two nations on earth that subscribe to mass aerial bombing as a part of their foreign policy today.)

Anyway, the point I am trying to make is that this whole question was my story--a selfish, lonely thing to be done by myself. That was two weeks ago that I was saying I will do this story. And what's happened in that two weeks? There are about 6,000 people on the Marine base here. And there are about 6,000 people doing that story of mine. I don't even have the choice any more of whether I'll do it or not. Some of them say in effect in their military fashion you will do it because we'll expose you to it so strongly that you can't help yourself. Others more gentle say in effect we will do it, together. But the result is the same (and of course it answers my original question): on the sheer basis of my having shown a sympathy, all these people have so thoroughly identified me with them--i.e., with something bigger than any of us--that I am completely committed not to let them down. There is a richness and warmth in this position that I, as a person, find in no other. . . .

You can reduce this to the simple statement, "They make a fuss over her?" (meaning me) and maybe that's all there is to it. But I can't quite be that cynical about myself, the story, or the Marines here. Their conviction that I can do something for them makes me try. And that's not a parlor trick, forcing me to make a greater effort than I would otherwise. Or if it is, it is their basic, elementary parlor trick, of which they themselves are the traditional victim.

Let me see if I can explain what I mean in terms of people (sorry to run on so, but this helps me think). Let's work it down by rank.

The Commanding General here, you remember, felt committed to make some sort of a gesture of hospitality, having invited me in his famous lisp--can you

imagine a Marine Corps general my height with a lisp?--to come aboard. But I don't think he was actually obligated to write every staff command on the base that I was to be trusted completely and to give orders to that effect in his own staff meeting. (If they aren't being followed, I'm the one who doesn't know it.)

His top deputy immediately invited me to sit in on "the boards," the meetings to correct the seamiest problems on the base and to "vote"--not that my vote counts!--on their recommendations about individuals up for discipline or discharge. The chief psychiatrist, who has his own board meetings on individual aptitude problems, also invited me to sit in on these. And the legendary Marine here who now among his many jobs runs "the brig," or base prison, invited me to the courts martial that are going on while I'm here. Each of these three men also gave me at least three hours of interviewing to make sure that I would get their side of the story, and then permitted me to talk with any man in trouble unless he was actually being held incommunicado as a part of his punishment. I never heard of their doing any of these things with a reporter before, and frankly, it isn't as helpful as it sounds. The military system in the Marines is far too tough to be even bent so easily--but they're awfully smart to play it this way because of course I can't say I was shielded from the discreditable.

Now to the senior training officers--the grey-haired fatherly one, to whose home I went last Sunday; the young Korea professional, who will someday be Commandant of the entire Corps, I'm sure; and the even younger officer who heads the training school <u>for instructors</u> and who says, "I never praise. I do not accept alibis. I do not smile where the men will see it." And adds, "But I'm not naturally that way; the first week I tried it, I couldn't sleep because it was so hard to do."--all of these, have gone to considerable inconvenience to tell their story and air their opinions hour after hour. They're awfully easy to do business with--I just take a leaf out of their own book and no matter what they say, I challenge, challenge, challenge. And by the time they have defended (or counter-challenged which is the natural thing for them to do) the air is pretty blue with conviction AND--I've got the story I came for. And don't let anyone tell you that The Military Mind runs in one channel, even if its methods are similar. I now have 23 answers to one question: "Just how tough does military training have to be?" and

about 13 different ones to almost any other question I may have. There is unanimity on only two points: recruit training today is less demanding on a man than it used to be; and (yes, both points are related) this is the only country on earth where Mother practically runs the assault forces.

I haven't had too much to do among the junior officers, although Morissey (the Information Services Officer) is one, and he hasn't had a minute free of the basic responsibility for my schedule and comfort since I landed here.

It's the top non-coms--the master sergeants--that are the backbone of the Corps, to use an old phrase.

And then we come to the drill instructors, traditionally the most important men in the Corps even though they are not commissioned. Every three months, one of these rigorously trained, pre-packaged and made-to-order supermen takes on his personal shoulders the responsibility for "making Marines" out of 75 recruits just here from civilian life. Two of these fabulous characters, Sgts. Merrick and Armstrong, have given me the run of their whole operation; "my" platoons (the 75 are called one training platoon) are Nos. 280 and 182, and the two drill instructors have agreed that I may come, go, eat, march, watch and photograph with their trainees exactly as I please. They simply look directly through me just as if I weren't there--and the 75 men do just what their drill instructor does. So now when they get bawled out, they have the additional calumny of being photographed while it happens. (Neither you nor Aunt Georgette will be crazy about one side result of my temporary identification with the Marine Corps drill instructor; I am developing, out of sheer imitativeness, a kind of Hitler-Maedel-Offizier swagger and stance which I will have to wear spike heels for months to unlearn.)

I know you're going to ask me what about the recruits; have I identified myself with them and if not why not? Well of course, that's where I started from, and where anybody sympathetic with underdogs would begin. The answer to my getting the best story is 2-pronged. First, you can't really interview a recruit; if you could get a self-expressive answer from him, his training would be at fault. For this three months and this three months only, he is so conscious of his drill instructor that no matter what I ask 'em, they sit on the edge of their chair and say, "No,

ma'am" and "Yes, ma'am" and "I like the Marine Corps fine, Ma'am" (this last at this stage being a complete untruth). So that's one answer. The other is that 9/10 of all the officers and men with whom I work here were themselves recruits here or at the one other training base. True, they seem to have managed to come out of it with quite a commitment toward the Marine Corps--but they somehow do not strike me especially as having been regimented in their thinking, brutalized in their actions, practitioners of sadism, nor degraded nor degrading. They are people who know how to get a job done, as the traditional compliment to the military reads. But they get it done by remarkably the same mechanics that we use to run CARE--as much wisdom as can be summoned, a little praise here and criticism there, the nag, the threat, the promise, the cajolery, the order, the reward. AND the big difference from other team efforts--the dedication, by which all these steps are louder, brighter and just a little bigger than life. They hate to have the wording of that dedication publicized outside their group because they say civilians call it corny, but anything that works this well can stand a little mention. You see, they never do a job to get it done. They say, we're going to do it better than it's been done because we're Marines.

I've been tracking back some of the words high in that last paragraph just for kicks. We always use them when we talk about military training per se. "Brutal," for example. The dictionary says it is "lacking the rational faculty." The traditional example in military training is the instructor shouting at the recruit with his face two inches from the wrong-doer's nose, and following the shouting with insults, threats or blows. Right? (I ain't seen nobody hit nobody yet and I don't imagine I shall.)

In his first speech to his new platoon, almost every drill instructor says that, as far as he can, he is "going to be a Mommie and a Poppy to you men." He enunciates the baby-talk with considerable sarcasm to brace up the homesick in the group--and then proceeds to do exactly as he said just as if he'd said it sincerely, looking out for "his" men against all other platoons and even higher authority on the one hand and teaching them all kinds of things, including--literally--how to wash their skivvies on the other.

At this point, I'll buy that violence is probably as

> inherent in Marine training as it is in bringing up mannered children. But brutality is not inherent; it's there because it's in people and not because the people are in the Marines. Moreover, having worked for two sadistic bosses in the usual sense of the word (Thompson and Heckman) and contemplating working for a third (Flynn), I think it is material to point out that drill instructors are screened for it (that screening is a part of my story) and managing editors are not.
>
> Anyway, this should reassure you that I have brought my full objective reasoning to bear on the problem of maltreatment. And you can see how objective my objectivity is![9] (Italics hers)

Efforts to gain assistance in placing the story through the J. Walter Thompson Company, the Marine Corps' public relations consultants, for its recruiting program created some friction. The Marine Corps Headquarters advised Miss Chapelle that no further discussion concerning the extent of Marine Corps cooperation was possible until the finished manuscripts had been reviewed. "It is desired that the entire series of the boot camp story be submitted for review prior to any attempt of placement," the Marines told her.[10]

She replied by telegram as follows:

> Your undertaking review now most helpful to me repeat to me. But won't you want photos captions text as finally retailored for publication after material is sold? What will be effect on my trying to arrange that if it constitutes double military censorship in peacetime?[11]

Despite her irritation, she complied with the request.

Two years later the piece still had not been published and the subject arose in a letter from the Morisseys. She replied:

> To answer your question about why my Marine Corps Training story never saw magazine print--I think we overshot on this one . . . You indoctrinated me so convincingly that I tended to write exactly what the Marine Corps writes--and they do it for free. Anyway, I collected handsome rejection slips from the Digest, the Post, Look and Esquire as I recall. And I also remember I gave up my agent over the stories NOT because she couldn't sell 'em, but because she was so sure that what I said in them was entirely wrong. FYI /for your information/, Marine Corps Headquarters did read all the stuff before it was submitted, helped me organize the pictures and was not particularly pleased. They felt I hadn't made it sound like enough fun to be a boot . . . Frankly, I still think I'm going to sell the pieces even if I have to update them first.[12] (Italics hers.)

As predicted, the story appeared, but not until ten years later when the October 4, 1968, edition of the National Observer gave it better than a "full page spread."

Out to the "Bayonet Borders"

Revolutions in widely separated parts of the world temporarily drew Miss Chapelle from coverage of U. S. military forces in their peacetime activities.

There was the Hungarian uprising in 1955, from which she returned with a deep hatred for communism, and a deeper sympathy for the underdog.

The Algerian revolt against the French in 1957 appealed to her style of reporting. As mentioned previously, she withstood grave personal hardship on this assignment, and was rewarded with a five-part series which was syndicated to more than fifty

newspapers in the United States. For more than thirty days she lived in the desert with the Algerian rebels determined to have the other side of that story told. Her sentiments were clearly set forth in the second installment of the series:

> Like other Americans a month ago, all I knew about the fighting here I had learned from the inside pages of the newspaper. You have seen the items, short and monotonous . . . These reports have had something in common besides their sameness, they have all come from one side, the French. The Algerian War has remained a war almost nobody knows because the Algerians have never had a propaganda voice. Even today they issue no battle communiques. What I am writing about them here will go uncensored, because there is no censor. Until recently, they had no spokesman outside their leaders. The Algerians for the first time enabled one U. S. reporter to go from the States into their country on their side of the lines. I was she.[13]

The result was mutually beneficial to reporter and subject. It prepared her for another underground assignment--Castro and Cuba in 1958.

In the "Med" with the Sixth Fleet

In between there was a stint with the U. S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and a chance to observe at first hand those legendary fighting men, the Turks.

Meanwhile, in her dealings with the military, she continued to display a sense of responsibility in national security matters; and strictly honored confidences shared with information officers.

Typical of her attitude was her anxiety regarding a story on the treatment at the hands of the Red Chinese of a

former Korean War prisoner, Captain "Ted" Harris. She withheld delivery to The American Weekly magazine until she could be assured that nothing she said "prejudiced the national good, Harris personally," or her retaining his "generously-offered confidence."[14]

But it was probably her visit to the Sixth Fleet in November 1957 that exposed her to the charge of having "bought the party line."

"'Cat' Brown - Master of the Med" appeared in the March 1958 Reader's Digest. The piece heaped praise on Vice Admiral Charles Randall "Cat" Brown as the man "who could best write a book on how to wield the weapons of ultimate violence so as to avoid their ultimate use." It described the Sixth Fleet as the "one 'U. S. bomber base' which communists cannot ever claim to have zeroed in with a missile launcher . . . because they never know exactly where it is." It stressed Brown's acute consciousness of the "chance his sailors have to make warm friends--or equally warm enemies--in port."[15] In short, she saluted the image of seapower as embodied in Brown and the Sixth Fleet--the "Force for Peace," utilizing its unique "mobility" and "show the flag" capability to control the Mediterranean and act as a buffer against communism--all well worked Navy propaganda phrases, albeit true.

The question--Did the reporter yield to the talents of a skillful Navy information officer? Or was her report

the result of conclusions reached after careful and objective observation? The answer--perhaps a little of both.

On the same issue, a letter written to her aunt and uncle on November 24, 1957, emphasizes her consciousness of being given special treatment. It also illustrates clearly that she was realistic about the underlying motives involved. She wrote from Athens:

> What I think they are trying to do is give their full show. And boy! in this, they're succeeding . . . The Navy, in the past week, has thoroughly confused me with Jayne Mansfield and Claire Booth Luce. One facet of the Sixth Fleet's duties here now is a show fleet--and kids, I've seen the show. I think it's good for a long run . . . The Fleet Public Relations Officer, the right guy to have on my side I'm sure, has some responsibility for both my welcome and my work, and by next week he may have better compromised the two aims. On the matter of who I've seen you can't do better--our top admiral and NATO's, his boss, in nuclear war. But I've only had one day out of the time without an officer at my side. I hope the novelty-of-the-thing will wear off pretty quick to the brass . . . If by all this you get the general idea that the Mediterranean Fleet is pleased to have its own female correspondent (as long as she represents the 16,000,000 Digest readers)--I expect you're right. . . .[16]

"Trouble Spots" and Freedom of the Press

She spent Christmas of 1957 with the Turks, as the first American female accredited to them.[17] Her glowing report of their courage and stamina in a June 1958 Reader's Digest story entitled "Turkey: Land Where Russia Stops" won her words of praise from the Director of Turkish Information. He said: "I cannot conceive of a more bona fide

approach, even the most ardent Turk could not have done greater justice to the better qualities of the Turks."[18]

However, her admiration for them did not extend to their concept of Freedom of the Press. The same article was mildly critical of Turkish censorship. In it she said:

> One facet of modern Turkish life that gives even Turkey's best friends pause is the great caution with which the whole economic and political picture is dealt with in the local press. Turkey today has strict press censorship laws, and in Ankara they have bred the inevitable miasma of conspiracy. But from Turks outside the capital, I learned of resources of democratic vigor which even Jefferson would have saluted. The people are well aware that their press is not able to tell the whole story and they do not deny that it is a problem.[19]

Her presence in the Mediterranean made her knowledgeable about the political chain of events which led to the crisis in Lebanon. If the mark of a good reporter is a sixth sense which puts him or her on the scene at the moment of decision, in a potential trouble spot, then Dickey Chapelle was very good. She was not with the Marines when they went ashore in Lebanon on July 15, 1958, at the request of President Camille Chamoun, but neither was she far behind.

Her appraisal of U. S. participation there strongly supported the official position. In a Reader's Digest article entitled "The Night War Didn't Come in Lebanon," and another in Argosy called "The Untold Story of the Marines in Lebanon," she justified the U. S. presence in that country as a counter to the "Red plan for chaos in the Middle

East."[20] In addition, she refused to miss an opportunity to praise in print the performance of U. S. fighting men, especially her Marines. Of that aspect she wrote: "I think we came into Lebanon without lighting the fuse to global war there and now largely because of the character of the American fighting men. His command presence, first of all, is overwhelming. He looks big and tough and superbly equipped, because he is--and he knows it. Watch a Marine storm a beach as I have--on maneuvers or for real, under fire or into welcoming handshakes--and you've been a human being you expect inexorably to do what he came for."[21]

Next she was assigned to cover Jordan's King Hussein I for the Digest. A letter to her family reflects the reporter's disenchantment with the Jordanian information system at this time of tension. It said in part:

> I suppose the best real index of the tension is the King's press conference Thursday. I counted 33 newsmen --and there were 29 royal guards, each with his red headdress and each carrying no pistol or truncheon but an automatic rifle held at the ready the whole time we were near the young king. Every time we opened our cameras to change film, one of them stood over us with the weapon barrel in line with our hands. I've been searched--not roughly, and by women guards eleven times in five days. And the king insists we quote him as saying, "The internal situation is perfect." Phooey![22]

Miss Chapelle's reporting on Cuba in 1958-1959 is really a study in two strong personalities--Castro and Chapelle. Her apparent weakness for sympathizing with the underdog may have led her into becoming an admirer of Castro and a supporter of his revolution.[23] On the other

hand, the evidence compiled against the Batista government was convincing enough to make almost anyone a believer. Even though she had to be secreted into Cuba and was subjected to aerial bombing and other unpleasantness, she got the story for the Reader's Digest.[24] While with the Cuban rebels she was given carte blanche and acknowledged the cooperation in a short piece she wrote for the Marine Corps Gazette: "I think it is material to point out that the Castro command did everything they could to help my work. They imposed no censorship," she said.

When the victory came in 1959, Dickey Chapelle was among the thirteen correspondents who received medals from the new Cuban government for services rendered in covering the revolution.[26] She returned to Cuba again for the Digest to do a story entitled "Cuba, One Year Later."[27] This time she berated the Cuban leader, declaring that "the greatest threat to the Castro regime is Castro's own personality--disorganized, erratic, politically naive."[28] By this time, Castro's anti-Americanism had surfaced and his relations with American correspondents, including Chapelle, became strained. Her Digest piece reflects this change in relationships, and his reversal of policy for dealing with the press.

Indications are that Miss Chapelle felt somewhat betrayed by the developments in Cuba. In her annual lecture tours in the 1960's she took the "bearded

revolutionary" to task and frequently leveled criticism against her colleagues for their failure to keep the country informed about conditions in Cuba, as well as the State Department for its indifference to Batista terrorism "instead of taking a stand against dictatorship and injustice."[29]

She became personally involved with the anti-Castro forces and was among a small amphibious task force of Cubans halted by U. S. Customs Agents while enroute to Cuba on October 21, 1963.* This incident and the frustration she felt at interference by officials with press attempts to cover the Bay of Pigs action, resulted in her loud denouncement of existing information practices and policies. An Overseas Press Bulletin item at the time of her death relates this fact:**

> The episode /with the U. S. Customs Agents/ was one of the events which brought out her anger at official hindrance of correspondents covering the war. She called it a cause of indignation because "we really don't know what's going on." She also accused officials of misdirecting correspondents purposely so

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*According to the New York Times, October 21, 1963, edition, "U. S. Customs Agents hopped in their boat at Miami, buzzed out on the ocean off Miami Beach and turned back four boats headed for Cuba with machine guns and bombs to carry out a raid. It was no surprise to find photographer Georgette Dickey Chapelle aboard the 'mother boat'; a 50-foot motor yacht."

**Dickey was an Overseas Press Club Board Member and served on the Club's "Freedom of Information Committee."

that they were unable to do their jobs. She later testified to congressional committees on reporters' difficulties in covering the war in Cuba.[30]

Globe Hopping with the Military

Despite these differences, Dickey Chapelle was conscience-bound to observe the "rules of the information game." While some of the rules were unwritten, nevertheless she played by them.

In November 1960, she was given an opportunity that few reporters had to photograph the activity around the U. S. Navy's Guantanamo Naval Base. The area was sensitive politically and potentially dangerous militarily. She forwarded her pictures to the New York Times with the following admonition: "No law of censorship applies to these photographs. But--because they do show tactical movements of U. S. forces most of which were not photographed by nor described to any other news media at the time, I feel the pictures and most especially the captions should be subject to clearance before publication."[31]

This special consideration was reciprocated, as a passage from a letter to her agent illustrates: "The Pentagon brass--knowing my viewpoint is critical--have just invited me to cover two Ranger camps and the Air Force counterinterrogation school, three courses never seen by any reporter before."[32]

By early 1960, Miss Chapelle was "jump qualified" by

a U. S. Army airborne unit and went to the Pacific on assignment. She accompanied a combined intelligence team on a night parachute exercise in Korea. The experience, which included a treacherous night parachute jump into unfamiliar terrain, a night-long march with ice cold streams to be forded, and finally, an exhausting mountain climb by moonlight, was combined into a piece for the Digest called "Our Secret Weapon in the Far East."[23] In it she records a dialogue with the officer in charge, which in effect offers him an opportunity to propagandize the U. S. Army's popular answer to missile age warfare--"The trained intelligent soldier is in fact still our secret weapon. He can think. And he is the only missile that carries the power to create as well as to destroy," the officer was quoted as saying.

Later she was requested to submit the story for security review before publication. The Army's Special Forces had received poor treatment at the hands of another correspondent and "once bitten, were twice shy." A letter from Colonel F. B. Mills explained the requirement:

> It seems that not all correspondents are as responsible and conscientious as you, evidenced by a recent UPI story with respect to the 1st Special Forces group. This article is full of conjecture and inferences, bearing little resemblance to the material actually released to UPI for publication, and it has painted a picture which I think is definitely not in the best interests of this unit or the United States' position in the Far East.[34]

She submitted her script for review. It was returned with eleven "recommended changes" (five accuracy and six security). Miss Chapelle made the changes prior to publication.

On occasion the reporter helped the military fight its continuing battle against "hardware" obsolescence. A collection of her articles for Coronet in 1961, entitled "I Roam the Edge of Freedom," includes a piece headed "China Sea: Stormy Mercy Mission." Its message is clear from the following excerpt:

> . . . We charged into typhoons at such low altitudes that ocean spray often forced the pilot to fly blind. And our P2V aircraft are not merely of the same type that reached the Pacific in 1945; they are the same planes! The Navy has never had enough money to buy new ones. So our eyes and ears in this zone of potential crisis are these lumbering old heroines--hardly worthy of the most powerful nation on earth.[35] (Italics hers)

Vietnam--A New U. S. Press Policy

Dickey Chapelle's first visit to Vietnam in June 1961 and her second in May and June 1962 were productive and resulted in articles for Reader's Digest and National Geographic. The Digest featured "Father Hoa--The Fighting Priest of South Vietnam," while the National Geographic carried an account of Marine "Helicopters Over South Vietnam." She returned in December in time to brief Marine Lieutenant General Wallace M. Greene, Jr. (then Marine Corps Chief of Staff, later Commandant of the Marine Corps) and his staff on Viet Cong tactics. She followed up her briefing with a

fourteen-page report that any military staff officer would have been proud to have produced. In it she summarized her analysis into three major points:

> 1. We won't win in Asia by mere juggling of the mechanics of military and diplomatic action. . . . The Reds are willing and able to spoil, block and counter us just as quickly as we can move on any less-than-vigorous effort.
>
> 2. We will win in Asia if we commit our whole will, much more of our brains and a little more of our tissue.
>
> 3. We are in the position of a man complaining that he can't win when all he's fought with is his left hand. Only half in jest, I suggest we now use at least the other elbow and maybe one knee. . . .

This was followed by ten recommendations for future action.[36]

In reaction to what she called "shocking evidence of the entirely-new-in-all-U.S.-history policy on the part of the government about the press and national crisis." She poured out her misgivings to her Reader's Digest editor in a letter discussing future assignments in India and Cuba:

> If, as Defense spokesman Sylvester told us to our faces, "news is a weapon" of war and we reporters must be wholly controlled as we were during the Bay of Pigs and the current Cuban unpleasantness--I'd like to go on record in total opposition. We would carry Sylvester's argument one step further; surely "one voice" is efficient and pure dictatorship would be a still more efficient way to fight our war with communism. But I don't think we're going to try dictatorship in America on that argument, nor do I think the concomitant of dictatorship, controlled press, can be justified by it. What I mean is that the first step toward a secret police state is the destruction of a free press; we reporters are the only natural enemies the secret police have. Because I want to stay a reporter, I can't imagine any assignment (India, Cuba, Father

> Hoa . . .) more important than to help in what I trust is going to be a howling fight against the decision of the government (I think it was Mr. McNamara and the President, but you'd know about that) to dispose of the free press function of s e e i n g. I believe in military censorship after we've seen, and I further believe that its imposition now probably is the only acceptable mechanics by which we professional observers can be put back to work--riding ships and planes, standing beside the Gitmo Marines, and all the rest of it. And put back to work we must be. Or we must concede that America has already made the one long fateful step toward being less-than-free that I personally think is the most significant. And damnit I'm not just about to make that concession.[37] (Italics hers)

A Series of Frustrations

Miss Chapelle's experience during the brief hostilities between India and Red China in 1962 added to her frustration. She had gotten her story in Vietnam through sheer determination. But India, as Kipling had observed some years before, could not be "blitzed." She might have heeded his words to the effect that:

> It is not good for the Christian health,
>
> To hustle the Asian brown.
>
> For the Christian riles:
>
> And the Asian smiles.
>
> And he weareth the Christian down. . . .

and saved herself some exasperation. By mid-December she had reached a decision and described her mood in a letter to her closest living relative, Aunt Louise. In it she said:

> . . . believe me I am an unqualified expert on the public relations policies of the Indian government which has not only kept me from working but has prevented any other newsmen from seeing even an Indian soldier on duty (all those press reports you read are government hand-outs). In short, I've been traveling with official press parties, the only way reporters work out here; these are wholly controlled--we even powder our noses when the press officer says we may--and it is my first AND BELIEVE ME LAST experience of the kind. I am making a final effort this week to break the policy which is impeding all of us; if this effort fails I'll be home sadder and wiser damn quick.[38]

The combination of experiences in the years from 1958 through 1963 led her to take a strong stand in Kappa Alpha Mu's publication, National Photo Journalist.* In her article entitled "Is News Controlled?" she admitted her frightened reaction that "hand-outs and news briefings, which have all the authenticity of patent medicine ads, are replacing eyewitness accounts." She mentioned no names, but the reference was plain when she said: "All too often their 'second hand' news is furnished by people with a big stake in controlling what is published." Listing some major crises and events--Lebanon in 1958, the Bay of Pigs in 1962, the atmospheric bomb tests, the Cuban quarantine forces, and the Indian arms airlift, all in 1962, she asked why journalists were not allowed "to see the events as they happened"--and then answered her own question:

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*National Photo Journalist is the official publication of Kappa Alpha Mu, an honorary fraternity dedicated to the advancement of the photojournalism profession.

"Because agencies of the United States government banned them," she said; and then proceeded to document her case with specific incidents:

> Recently, an Associated Press reporter broke the story of a document from the State Department ordering the United States Ambassador in Viet Nam to keep reporters out of the areas where Americans were doing most of the fighting or where President Diem's popularity was obviously low. . . .
>
> In 1961 and 1962 most press stories on Viet Nam were releases of "leaks" from a New York public relations firm hired by the Viet Nam government to handle publicity on their war. They lost their contract last year because, according to their man in Viet Nam, "the United States government took over our work."
>
> In this grey-out of real news the insatiable appetite of the American press is too often satisfied with a non-journalistic phenomenon, the unattributable background briefing. A high government official will meet with us as a group or individually and assure us that he is giving us all we need to know. But we must not quote him.
>
> Another popular device to provide on-the-scene datelines is the press junket. There are few reporters who can't say they have been offered a free jet trip to a news scene by Uncle Sam. We can expect to be housed, fed and entertained at nominal expense and escorted by an officer, civilian or military, with the equivalent rank of at least major. He serves as tour director and issues press kits. The group will be allowed to see an exhibition or a controlled segment of the area in which news purportedly was made. With a slick rewrite of the press kit spiced with a few personal observations the reporter can file a story.
>
> Fortunately, those of us who are photojournalists are irrevocably committed to being eyewitnesses to news. We cannot shoot the riot or the clash of armies from the comfort of a hotel bar miles from the scene of action.
>
> So far the only place I've been thrown into prison for trying to cover a story from the scene of action was in Hungary--and that was by the Communists. But

> I've been made to feel very unwelcome by our own people for pressing too hard to see for myself on several occasions. We must remain free to observe, report and criticize. Abridgment of these functions of the press is a violation of the First Amendment. Sadly, the executive branch of the government doesn't seem to agree.[39]

After each visit to Vietnam in 1964 and 1965, Dickey Chapelle took to the lecture circuit defending U. S. military presence, advocating an increased commitment, and generally criticizing administration policy toward the press in Vietnam.

In a lecture given in Dallas, Texas, she commented on a new trend in war reporting:

> The most important story of a war is man kills man. Yet much of the reporting of this war /Vietnam/ is on policy. I can remember the day when it was difficult to get a policy story out of a combat zone. Today, it is difficult to get a combat story.[40]

And in Wilmington, Delaware, she told a group of American Association of University Women:

> . . . it's up to the people to have a campaign now that we've admitted we're at war, to provide eye-witness coverage at the scene. . . . I never thought I'd see the day when I'd welcome censorship but I'd rather have it than complete control.[41]

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Major J. A. O'Brien, USMC, interview with author at the Pentagon, Washington, D. C., April 22, 1968.

[2]Letter to Tony Chapelle from Captain Fitzhugh Lee, USN, April 30, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[3]Dickey Chapelle, What's a Woman Doing Here? (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962), p. 64.

[4]Agreement, Twelfth Naval District Headquarters, February 6, 1945, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 1.

[5]Chapelle, What's a Woman Doing Here?, p. 96.

[6]Letter to Dickey Chapelle from Major General J. C. MacQueen, USMC, September 1, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[7]Letter to Major General MacQueen, USMC, September 3, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[8]Chapelle, What's a Woman Doing Here?, p. 141.

[9]Letter to "Marm," October 10, 1955, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 2.

[10]Letter to Dickey Chapelle from Colonel J. L. Mueller, USMC, January 13, 1956, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[11]Telegram to Colonel J. L. Mueller, USMC, ibid.

[12]Letter to Morisseys, March 15, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[13]Philadelphia (Pa.) Daily News, September 10, 1957.

[14]Letter to Colonel James Munroe, USAFR, June 28, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[15]Reader's Digest, March 1958, pp. 77-79.

[16]Letter to aunt and uncle, November 24, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[17]Letter to family, December 28, 1957, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[18]Letter to Dickey Chapelle from Director of Turkish Information Office, June 2, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[19]Reader's Digest, June 1958, p. 69.

[20]Reader's Digest, February 1959, p. 85.

[21]Argosy, November 1958, p. 95.

[22]Letter to family, August 23, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 4.

[23]Reader's Digest, April 1959, p. 18.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Marine Corps Gazette, February 1960, p. 41.

[26]New York Times, April 19, 1959.

[27]Reader's Digest, January 1960, p. 74.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Lecture to James River Woman's Club, 1965, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[30]Overseas Press Bulletin, November 6, 1965.

[31]Letter to the New York Times Photo Editor, November 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[32]Letter to agent, June 13, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[33]Reader's Digest, June 1960, p. 200.

[34]Letter to Dickey Chapelle from Colonel F. B. Mills, USA, March 28, 1960, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[35]Coronet, February 1961.

[36]Letter to Lieutenant General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., USMC, December 9, 1961, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[37]Letter to Hobart Lewis, Reader's Digest, November 4, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[38]Letter to Aunt (Lutie), December 18, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[39]National Photo-Journalist, Vol. XVII (1963).

[40]Dallas (Tex.) Times Herald, March 26, 1965.

[41]Wilmington (Del.) Morning News, April 5, 1965.

CHAPTER V

THE LEGACY OF A REPORTER

All reporters worthy of their profession leave a legacy. Dickey Chapelle's legacy was in her contributions to the public and the profession. They are reflected in her reputation, her standards, her sacrifices, and her accomplishments, as well as in her stand on issues of national importance. Evidence touching on some of these factors has already been presented. More will be offered here.

Miss Chapelle used the written word and the photograph to tell her stories. She was skillful with both. Asked why she employed the two media, she answered: "Some things can be said best with words; others only in a picture. I'm lazy. I use the typewriter and camera interchangeably."[1]

Advice from a Professional

Letters from aspiring young journalists are a measure of stature and inevitable in the life of a widely published reporter. She both wrote and received her share. The years following 1960 were significant in her career. She had begun to publish stories with greater regularity.

Her internment by the communists had made her a newsworthy personality as well as a reporter. Publishers' acceptances began to outnumber rejections; and the fan mail began to flow in moderate proportions.

Among those seeking advice on a career in journalism was a young eighth grade girl from Eugene, Oregon, to whom the reporter offered a bit of wisdom from her past:

> My best advice about journalism as a career came from an old city editor who once told me, "If you can stand to do anything else, except be a reporter--do it and forget reporting. . . .

She further advised:

> Probably the only character trait indispensable to a reporter is a compulsive love of story-telling. If you'd rather do that than eat, even in your teens, then journalism is right for you. . . .

And on women in journalism:

> I haven't found my professional way made harder because I'm a woman, no. I do think that women as observers work a little differently, perhaps more intuitively as we're told, than men. But this is not a disadvantage to a trained professional.[2]

On occasion, the advice was more basic as in an exchange of letters with a sixteen-year-old Albuquerque girl:

> . . . The purpose of story-telling out of an indignant heart is to persuade the reader to share your urgency to act on that indignation. And I'm sure you know now that the reader needs more persuasion than the writer's opinion. If you say a thing is "horrible," you must tell a story proving it. And then your direct opinion is just extraneous. . . .

Earlier she had told the same girl:

> I imagine my final bit of advice may be the least popular: take very good care of yourself physically. Like a soldier. And for roughly the same reason.[3]

Her advice to youth in general was freely given to the young high school, college, and women's club groups which made up the bulk of her lecture audiences: "You can go out and change the world! If you don't, somebody else will."[4]

Proof that she was earning a reputation by following this philosophy came from a January 1960 issue of Signpost, a woman's publication. In it, prize-winning writer Donald Robinson summed her up as "the most adventurous correspondent in many a decade."[5]

Milestones to Recognition

Dickey's first real breakthrough into the ranks of the "professionals" came as a result of the Reader's Digest Christmas story competition in 1957. Her account of imprisonment in Budapest during the Hungarian revolt in 1955-1956 won her the award as well as the prestige which accompanied it. There were many warm responses to the piece, among them one from the famed evangelist and columnist, Billy Graham, who called the Christmas story "one of his favorites."[6]

Next came her autobiography. Reviewers' sympathetic reactions delighted the reporter and buoyed her confidence. As one Los Angeles Mirror reviewer said:

> Reporters' autobiographies notoriously are bad publishing risks for a simple reason: readers couldn't care less about the author's fate. Since the day of

> Nellie Bly, few newshens have dared break the tradition that women writers should be on the scene and not heard. Dickey Chapelle . . . not only dared violate the rule, she did it well. Writing in a field where more females like Mickey Hahn, Margaret Bourke-White, Becky West, and Dorothy Kilgallen feared to tread, she makes the profession of journalism sound exciting . . . Dickey writes a good adventure story with high drama in low key.[7]

Quentin Reynolds' critique in the Saturday Review grouped the author with the "extraordinary" professional women who "established the tradition that anything we could do they could do as well or better." He praised her as "one of the most capable of her breed."[8]

Military friends responded as well. Among the many complimentary notes was one from Lieutenant General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., which said: "I just finished your book . . . I enjoyed it very much. I congratulate your ability to write prose as well as you take pictures."[9]

The Reader's Digest, in its 40th Anniversary Issue of February 1962, offered an additional bonus by including a condensation of What's a Woman Doing Here? Preceding the forty-page version was a brief introduction. In it, Miss Chapelle was hailed as "one of the bravest women around, and one of the best reporters and photographers in the business. . . ." Further, the Digest gave an insight into the reporter's basic objective and what might be called the backbone of her reporting:

> As always, what Dickey was doing there was getting at the story behind the story . . . Her life-story is filled with the sight and sound of men in battle, with

> humor, courage and pathos. Through it all runs the urge to report to people at home what the score is on the front lines of freedom.[10]

Dickey Chapelle reacted to the windfall with a half humorous, half serious expression of gratitude to her editor:

> Obviously, I was completely unprepared for the generous measure of recognition I'm enjoying--, the incredible flattery of the blurb on my book (I should /say/ your or at least our), its inclusion in the 40th Anniversary Issue and in the same Issue with "Do We Intend To Win the Cold War?"--all these signal honors have just reduced me to inarticulate delight and hence total uselessness to the Reader's Digest.[11] (Italics hers)

Her photographs of Vietnam began to appear in the most unlikely places. The State Department used them in staff briefings, and the Navy's former Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, wrote her in March 1962 commenting on them. He mentioned seeing some while attending a meeting with the Secretary of Defense Advisory Committee on Non-Military Instruction in Washington. The Admiral praised the photos as "magnificent" and noted the expressions on the faces which "made many of them a lot more than just action pictures." He said:

> Nobody told me who had taken them. I looked at the first two pictures and wondered who the photographer was who could get such excellent pictures and looked and found your name on them. I was very proud to announce that I know that gal. No wonder these pictures are good for she also knows people.[12]

Finances were always a problem for Miss Chapelle. She had sold stories to magazines with a reputation for

paying well. However, money was relatively unimportant to her, and she was sometimes extravagant with it. Fortunately, her photographs were a source of fairly constant income.

While not necessarily typical, the two-month period in February and March 1962 was productive in terms of photo sales.[13] She sold an article with pictures on Father Hoa to the Saturday Evening Post; she was paid fifty dollars for a "Sea Swallows" cover picture in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, with two photos inside; the New York Times "News of the Week in Review" featured a front page picture and paid fifty dollars and another twenty-five dollars for some inside photos; the U. S. Army magazine bought ten Vietnam pictures for two hundred dollars; and a new publication, USA-1, which stressed photography and advanced layout techniques included in its front page some Chapelle photos bought for two hundred fifty dollars.

To this point in her career, Dickey Chapelle's reputation probably rested chiefly on her ability as a photographer. The U. S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondent's and Photographer's Association honored her with its annual award for "her brave endeavors, and professional excellence in reporting the cause of combat Marines everywhere." Astronaut John Glenn had been the recipient in 1961.[14]

Her book and articles on Vietnam for the Reader's Digest then focused attention on her writing skills as well.

On April 3, 1962, at its annual awards banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, the Overseas Press Club paid tribute to Dickey Chapelle by bestowing on her its highest award, the George Polk Memorial Award, for "best reporting in any medium requiring exceptional courage and enterprise abroad." She was the second woman to win the award in twenty years. Marguerite Higgins had received it a few years before. New York Times writer Kathleen McLaughlin, a member of the awards committee, described Miss Chapelle's selection as a tribute to her outstanding triple performance: her writing on Vietnam in the Reader's Digest, her autobiography, and a color photo story published in the National Geographic.[15]

Closely akin to a "Pulitzer Prize,"[16] the award carried with it a $500 cash prize; but its significance in terms of journalistic achievement is somewhat reflected in the reputations of others who were honored with awards that evening: Bob Considine, Howard K. Smith, Marvin Kalb, and David Schoenbrun.

When the crisis between India and Red China escalated into open warfare in October 1962, the Counselor of Embassy for South Vietnam wrote to the sister of Prime Minister Nehru to request support for her as she prepared to cover the war for the Digest. His regard for the correspondent is apparent from what he said:

> . . . She had proven her talents in many other war fronts, including her recent trips in Vietnam, and I have complete confidence in her integrity and abilities as well as in her strong friendship with the Asian peoples. . . . I should confess that my motivation is basically selfish. I wish someone of her position and capability to do justice to the heroic resistance of the Indian people against Chinese aggression.[17]

With her growing reputation as an expert on Vietnam and the increased public interest in U. S. involvement in Far Eastern affairs, Miss Chapelle was invited to appear on several radio and television panel discussion shows in New York City and the British and Canadian broadcasting systems. Following a visit to the Jack Paar show, she received a letter from an old Marine master sergeant friend. He praised her performance and added: "It was the first time I ever saw you in a dress and I wouldn't pass up an opportunity like that. Damn, you have a nice figure."[18]

Issues, Interests, and Objectivity

Dickey Chapelle has been described as a participant and partisan by nature. Obviously, this characteristic served her poorly in the role of an objective reporter. However, it was ideal for a correspondent who felt a compulsion to observe and then to take a stand. Her fondness for causes and her sympathy for people in trouble has been noted previously. For this reason, she sometimes transgressed that fine line of detachment along which most reporters are required to tread. If this failing is at all excusable, it might be on the grounds that she was a woman

and hers the story behind the story. Her primary interest was in people, generally those in trouble. There are few neutrals in these situations. Perhaps it is only the most disciplined reporter who can resist identifying with his subject. One might even generalize and say that some women reporters are particularly susceptible and find the temptation irresistible.

At any rate, Dickey Chapelle usually had a point of view and it often was apparent in her work. She was inclined to moralize to her reader and perhaps in this she performed a service, by exhorting her colleagues and her fellow Americans to rise to the challenges of today. She was often critical of press performance, public apathy, and government information policy. At every opportunity she pointed out the direct relationship between communist advances and democracy's blunders.

Her series on the Algerian rebels in 1957 stressed what she viewed as an issue "critical to U. S. foreign policy all over the world." She noted the absence of Voice of America broadcasts in the Middle East and attributed to it a certain naivete among Algerians regarding communist intentions. Her general appraisal of the Algerian situation was to view the event as a lesson of "how the affairs of nations can develop, manipulated only indirectly by raw power, so that freedom looks longingly at tyranny for support."[19]

She translated the dispute in Lebanon into its basic meaning when she wrote:

> When you see the terror and the tears of a shooting war--the real victims, the actual human beings whose lives will never be the same again because they fought in the battle for their street or their town or their friends--it is hard to think of those lights burning late at the U.N. or the Pentagon or the Kremlin as having any reality. . . . I can't feel that the big people are manipulating the little ones. I do believe that the hatred and will to chaos of all of us is victimizing all of us--maybe the big people, too.[20]

And amidst the jubilation from Cuba, which had purged itself of a "terrorist dictator," she cautioned:

> Chief among Castro's problems will be the degree to which he permits the Communists to influence his government. The Reds always try to exploit any successful revolution and to claim a major part in the victory. Revolutions before this one have started out with brave ideals, only to end in a return to tyranny.[21]

The piece, called "Remember the 26th of July," appeared in the April 1959 Reader's Digest and was read into the Congressional Record by the late Senator Richard L. Neuberger.[22]

The military also profited from Dickey's analytical skill and familiarity with military tactics. Her writing on guerrilla warfare tactics as she observed them in Cuba was published as a tactical study in the Marine Corps Gazette and also appeared in the Irish Defense Journal--An Cosantoir. It enjoyed the added prestige of being included in an anthology on modern guerrilla war as one of thirty-seven major articles selected from over six hundred

studies on the subject.[23]

By 1963 she was an experienced lecturer and a much sought after speaker. The Reader's Digest Foundation-sponsored 18th Annual Conference, Girls Clubs of America welcomed her as their featured speaker in an address entitled "Well Girls? The Challenge to Excellence."

Vietnam: The Need for Decision

It was on the U. S. commitment in Vietnam that Miss Chapelle took one of the strongest stands of her professional career. She identified what newspapers years later labeled "Vietnam policies" while they were still in embryo. Popular issues of the late 1960's, such as the U. S. "no win" policy in Vietnam, were being described by the reporter as early as 1962, when she wrote her Aunt Louise:

> Soldiers in Vietnam get confused because nobody's told them to go ahead and win (our soldiers, I mean). They've just been told to get their service over with without risking anything--no pattern of even remotely possible victory there.[24]

The same year, she identified the conflict in South Vietnam as North Vietnamese communist inspired and not a civil war as some insisted. Of this aspect, she wrote:

> This was the real front of the Free World where the people of South Viet Nam with United States help were fighting Communists led from North Viet Nam.[25]

She witnessed and described the radical change in modern limited warfare "tactics" made possible by the helicopter in her Digest piece, "Helicopters Over South Viet Nam":

> It /the helicopter/ bespoke a shift in the winds of a war /she said/. Two years earlier, isolated villages could have had little notion of their government's efforts to defend them. Now an outer world was being unveiled, with fleets of helicopters thudding overhead, hunting Viet Cong guerrillas, or alighting to disgorge disciplined troops, at times by battalion.

Her photographs, taken from the air, she said, confirmed the presence of "Red regulars":

> They wore helmets, carried packs. We were seeing what had been only a ghost force to most Americans here: conventional Communist forces miles from North Viet Nam, where by treaty they were required to remain.[26]

Dickey Chapelle's devotion to physical fitness often led her into a comparison of U. S. and communist country youths in her lectures. She described the young Reds as physically tough and accustomed to hardship, while American youngsters were fat and soft. Two St. Paul, Minnesota, high school boys took exception to her statements and approached her after a lecture with a challenge of their own. The boys, both seniors, were eighteen and seventeen years old, respectively. They insisted that anything a communist boy could do they would do better. They suggested a twenty-five-mile hike to prove the point. The following Saturday, the two boys along with a thirty-nine-year old Marine recruiting sergeant and a forty-four-year old woman reporter, Dickey Chapelle, walked twenty-five miles in twelve hours with four rest stops and six rendezvous with newsmen.[27] The incident was widely publicized by a wire service and resulted in a letter from an old friend.

Admiral Arleigh Burke kiddingly accused the reporter of "egging the young men on" and then taking them on a "twenty-five-mile stroll to satisfy your own sadistic pleasure."[28]

Reporting from the Lectern

On occasion, Miss Chapelle used the lecture podium to recruit for the military. She suggested that young people should try to emulate the American Special Forces who were fighting in Vietnam. "These men are in the greatest adventure of our time," she said. She urged that more young men investigate the "new profession of leading the world, military advisers."[29]

Frequently, the themes of her lectures had to do with events in Cuba and Vietnam, with a soft and irresolute American public, and with widespread apathy in the United States:

> Yes /she said/, it's economically uncomfortable to pressure Castro and your government doesn't think you're ready. If you are, don't accept such things as the tax cut. Make sure your sons are trained to live, not die. Above all communicate literally with your government, give your view on foreign policy and state clearly what sacrifices you are willing to make.[30]

The question, she insisted, was whether the U. S. wanted to win in Southeast Asia badly enough to expend whatever was needed. Her recommendation was a "ringing 'yes.'" The alternative, as she saw it, was a "Domino Theory" effect with a temporary mollifying of communism

only to become embroiled again "in a month, a year or a few years." Her solution was "for each of us to decide what we want to do, and to give the government we have elected freely some clear evidence of our will to win, lose or draw."[31]

By 1965, the correspondent has made four trips to Vietnam on assignment and favored the growing U. S. involvement there. If anything, she was impatient with the increments of U. S. forces being assigned. She continued to stress the importance of a commitment by the American people to what she believed was a direct confrontation with communism in the Pacific:

> War is a test of will power and not machinery /she said/. The only factor missing in the Indo-China crises has been the will of the American people. The instability of the South Viet Nam government is not a critical factor. Given enough military victories it doesn't matter who occupies the palace.[32]

She put her finger on a factor in 1965 which two years later was to become the central issue in a controversy involving then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General William C. Westmoreland, commander of U. S. forces in Vietnam. Miss Chapelle told five hundred women at the Theta Sigma Phi 35th Annual Matrix Banquet at the University of Wisconsin that the U. S. was losing the war in Vietnam. She then identified what she felt was an important reason, the U. S. tradition of having three to five men in support of every fighting man. "This is not

utilizing our combat capacity to the fullest," she said.[33] McNamara echoed this sentiment after a visit to Westmoreland's command in 1968. (It was not long thereafter that General Creighton Abrams was named to succeed Westmoreland.)

During her Madison speech, she entertained the group with stories of her experiences in the field. She conveyed the humor and danger of the assignment when she told of a Christmas 1966 raid she had made with a South Vietnamese Navy River Assault Group in a "fleet of sampans." "Do you know what a sampan is?" she asked. "It's four boards held together with Elmer's Glue."[34] For dramatic effect during her lecture, she customarily reached into a small handbag and pulled out a captured North Vietnam flag of blue and red, with an angled five-pointed star centered. The gesture served to introduce her main point, and the real message, of the talk in Madison. She pointed to the flag and said:

> I want you all to notice the peculiar shape of this star as opposed to the stars in our American flag. I have seen this angled star on too many flags in too many places. Let me tell you something--that whenever our star is withdrawn, this other star takes over.[35]

Her visit to the Wisconsin campus in March 1965 coincided with the first "teach-in" at that university designed to protest the U. S. commitment in Vietnam. The same day, Miss Chapelle helped to organize and participated in a "counter teach-in" on campus. A week later she told a group of American Association of University Women in

Wilmington, Delaware, of her experience in Madison.

The Wilmington Morning News printed the following version:

> "Speaking of students," her deep voice betraying more than a touch of irony, "the thing that has distressed me most was the sight of college students carrying the intolerable weight of cardboard signs on their manly shoulders saying 'End Gas Warfare.' Hanoi just loves that kind of thing, you know. They love to point out our people back home who are undermining everything we're trying to do. I looked up the word 'treason,' and I guess it's not that . . . maybe 'sedition' would describe it. But when you have men dying for your freedom, to protest what they haven't done is a terrible thing. . . ."[36]

She went on to describe the conditions in which tear gas is used by U. S. combat forces and likened it to "merciful police procedures," calling it "the kindest thing you can do" under the circumstances.

Santo Domingo: A New Objective

It was the crisis in Santo Domingo in the summer of 1965 that led the reporter to write on what she felt was a new and unique military tactic. Along with the traditional military objectives of seize, occupy, and defend, she identified a new one developed to meet the needs of a new age--make friends. In her National Observer story, she wrote:

> To be sure, off duty soldiers have always shared their food with local children. World War II was full of incidents of GI's assuming the roles of unofficial ambassadors. But programs of friendship carried out under military orders by U. S. combat troops is a development that has grown up with what policy makers call the "limited objective" and "flexible response"

> approach to waging war. What has emerged is a new military doctrine of constabulary and compassionate tactics that may someday be America's unique contribution to the history of force. From Beirut in 1958 to Santo Domingo last month, U. S. troops have been consciously pioneering new ways to military victory other than those of violence. The experiments take place in remote and lonely places, but there are enough of them by now to see an emerging pattern.[37] (Italics hers.)

After Death--Status and Impact

Three months later, while on operation with a Marine unit south of Da Nang in South Vietnam, she was wounded in the neck when a mine booby trap exploded among the troopers. She died on the floor of a medical evacuation helicopter. Dickey Chapelle was the first newswoman and third member of the press killed in the Vietnam war.[38] Since then fourteen newsmen have lost their lives covering the war, making a total of seventeen as of May 27, 1968.

The tribute which came from fellow newsmen, military men, and friends reflect on her professionalism as well as her status and impact.

The New York Times, in a lengthy piece, recalled her splendid photographs of men in battle and her equally splendid capacity to supplement them with words.[39]

Bob Considine, in a column, wrote:

> She ventured where angels and men twice her size and half her age feared to tread, not with any aura of bravado but simply because she felt that if a newspaper or radio chain hired her to cover a war, it deserved war coverage, not a rewrite of a headquarters mimeographed handout. . . . Dickey was one heaven of a woman.[40]

Time Magazine reviewed the highlights of her life and described her seven-week Hungarian imprisonment:

> By starving and brainwashing her, the Communists tried to force her to admit that she was guilty of espionage. But she never broke. "The old rules," she wrote later, "still held good in this as in any other conflict between human beings. If you fought hard enough, whatever was left of you afterward would not be found stripped of honor."[41]

A friend and colleague described her death as "a great loss to journalism." "Dickey's image as a tough combat correspondent was deserved," he said. "But away from war's grim environment, she was an absolutely charming woman."[42]

Long-time friend and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Wallace Greene forwarded a citation which read:

> She was not only a skilled, dedicated newspaperwoman, but she was an exemplary patriot whose great love for her country was an inspiration to all who knew her and worked with her. . . . She was one of us, and we will miss her.[43]

"She was the kind of reporter all women in journalism openly and secretly aspire to be," said a scroll from the Women's National Press Club.[44]

From Hearst Magazines in Europe, Richard Thomas wrote:

> Dickey Chapelle was a wonderful person and a terrific writer--fearless, determined, and successful in her quest for news. Moreover, she got her story out against all odds. Dickey Chapelle was the kind of reporter most of us would like to be.[45]

Newsweek summed it up:

> If Dickey Chapelle had had her choice of deaths, it would have been exactly as it happened last week--in combat with the United States Marines. . . . It was the end of a love affair of many years between Dickey and the U. S. Marines. She had covered wars with soldiers and rebels of nearly a dozen countries from Korea to Algeria. But she was never so happy as when, turned out in fatigues, boots and floppy bush hat, she pushed into some remote danger spot with a Marine rifle squad. Newsmen who didn't know her would wince when Wisconsin-born Dickey Chapelle showed up in a war zone, bellowing her gravel-voiced imitation of a Marine drill instructor. But after a short time, even the most hostile male correspondents became admirers of a woman who not only never sought any of the privileges of her sex but who was also a highly talented journalist and a skilled photographer.[46]

The tributes took a variety of forms.

Students and colleagues of her brother, Professor Robert P. Meyer, at the University of Wisconsin, initiated a memorial fund honoring the reporter. The fund sought to establish a journalism fellowship for field work in troubled areas.[47]

The Overseas Press Club voted unanimously to endorse the Dickey Chapelle Memorial Fund originated by a college group at the University of Wisconsin's Committee to Support the People of South Viet Nam.[48]

The National Observer assembled and offered free distribution of a booklet of her featured coverage of Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic.[49]

The Overseas Press Club requested of the Department of Defense that Miss Chapelle be considered for a special posthumous award.[50]

The Dickey Chapelle Memorial Hospital was built in Ly Tin, South Vietnam, with materials purchased by the Marine Corps Reserve Civic Action Fund.[51] Today it is operating at full capacity.

How Other Correspondents Saw Her

The problem in determining Dickey Chapelle's status within her profession is to disassociate apparently irrelevant factors which affected her reputation among colleagues but had no bearing on her professional contributions to journalism.

The tendency is to discount personal qualities like courage and individualism as extraneous to the issue. However, any list of preferred qualifications for a foreign correspondent probably would include these two qualities high among the most prized.

The study has established that Dickey Chapelle was a courageous journalist. The questions remain: did she also possess other acknowledged qualifications of the profession; and how was she regarded by her colleagues.

The questionnaire used in conjunction with the study and directed to the group of reporters who probably knew her best, foreign correspondents of the Saigon Press Corps, included a section devoted to the subject's professionalism. In addition to a check list of eighteen qualities, the respondents were asked to rate the subject as a photographer

and a journalist, and to compare her with such female correspondents as Marguerite Higgins, Margaret Bourke-White, Rebecca West and/or others of that caliber. Further, they were requested to list her greatest assets and shortcomings and then to describe her reputation and impact as a correspondent. Almost thirty per cent replied.

All respondents who thought themselves qualified to make the judgments "definitely agreed" that Dickey Chapelle was intelligent, resourceful, courageous, dedicated, realistic, colorful, confident, industrious, dynamic, and individualistic. All either "probably agreed" or "definitely agreed" that she was impartial, expert, and thorough. On the other hand, they "definitely disagreed" that she was naive; and either "definitely disagreed" or "probably disagreed" that she was ruthless, impressionable, shallow, and impulsive.

As a photographer, her colleagues were almost unanimous in evaluating her performance as "highly professional." As a journalist, almost sixty per cent of the respondents rated her as "highly professional"; the remaining forty per cent thought her to be "average professionally." No respondent graded her as "below average professionally" either as a photographer or journalist.

Of the eight respondents who compared her with the other female correspondents mentioned above, two thought her to be "superior," three thought her their "equal," and one

judged her to be "subordinate." One said he found it impossible to make a comparison because Marguerite Higgins and the others operated in the reportorial sphere while Dickey Chapelle was a photo-journalist.

In listing her greatest assets, most mentioned her courage, drive, curiosity, and experience. Several noted her ability to "be where things were happening."

On the question of her shortcomings, several said she had none. One mentioned her "tendency to dogmatic judgments" and an "individualistic approach that tended to hide her true professionalism." Another felt that she concentrated on the peripheral or feature type story too heavily.

In describing her reputation among correspondents, some of the descriptive words used were: excellent, respected, liked, admired. One said, "She stood head and shoulders above the best." Another felt "she was respected, but some correspondents tended to overlook her professional competence because of her colorful character. They regarded her as a maverick with an excessive commitment to the military."

Most replies failed to identify any "Chapelle impact." Said one reporter: "Among 400 to 600 here at a time, one never sees the impact of another's work." Another was more specific and said, "She had little impact on other correspondents per se because when she came to Vietnam she

immediately went about her own commitments in the field, and there were few correspondents with her. I know though that the Vietnamese Airborne always--for years afterward--talked of her combat jumps she made with them."

Another was more positive in his answer: "Dickey usually was there first," he said. "Those who followed her came equipped with tearsheets of stories she had written. Thus, many did their homework by reading Dickey's reports."

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1]Keuka (N. Y.) Keukonian, October 17, 1958, p. 2.

[2]Letter from an eighth grader, Eugene, Oregon, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[3]Letter to Kay Shaffer, February 17, 1958, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 3.

[4]Keuka (N. Y.) Keukonian, October 17, 1958, p. 1.

[5]Signpost Magazine, January 1960, p. 7.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Los Angeles (Calif.) Mirror, January 5, 1962.

[8]The Saturday Review, May 12, 1962, p. 28.

[9]Letter from Lieutenant General W. M. Greene, Jr., February 2, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[10]The Reader's Digest, February 1962, p. 258.

[11]Letter from Hobart Lewis, January 26, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[12]Letter from Admiral A. Burke, March 15, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[13]Letter to Nancy Palmer, February 25, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[14]Letter to Dickey Chapelle, November 19, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[15]Miss Kathleen McLaughlin interview with author in New York City April 16, 1968.

[16]Professor W. Ragsdale interview with author at the University of Wisconsin April 30, 1968.

[17]Letter from Mr. Tran Van Dinh, October 30, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[18]Letter from Msgt. A. C. Mainard, undated, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[19]Philadelphia (Pa.) Daily News, September 9, 1957.

[20]Argosy, "The Untold Story of the Marines in Lebanon," November 1958, p. 95.

[21]The Reader's Digest, "Remember the 26th of July," April 1959, p. 18.

[22]The Congressional Record, April 22, 1959.

[23]Franklin M. Osanka, Modern Guerrilla Warfare (Glencoe: Free Press, 1962).

[24]Letter to Aunt Lutie (Louise), February 7, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[25]National Geographic, "Helicopters Over South Viet Nam," November 1962, p. 724.

[26]Ibid., p. 748.

[27]St. Paul (Minn.) Sunday Pioneer Press, March 25, 1962, p. 11.

[28]Letter from Admiral A. Burke, May 1, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 5.

[29]Duluth (Minn.) News Tribune, April 7, 1962.

[30]Alliance (Ohio) Review, February 22, 1964.

[31]The Face of War--Vietnam (A Parliament Magazine), 1965, p. 36.

[32]Buffalo (N. Y.) Evening News, February 25, 1965.

[33]University of Wisconsin (Madison), The Daily Cardinal, March 31, 1965.

[34]Madison (Wis.) Wisconsin State Journal, March 31, 1965.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Wilmington (Del.) The Morning News, April 5, 1965.

[37]National Observer, August 2, 1965.

[38]Milwaukee (Wis.) Journal, November 4, 1965.

[39]New York Times, November 4, 1965, p. 1.

[40]Milwaukee (Wis.) Journal, November 13, 1965.

[41]Time Magazine, November 12, 1965.

[42]Overseas Press Bulletin, November 20, 1965.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Newsweek Magazine, November 15, 1965.

[47]Overseas Press Bulletin, November 20, 1965.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Madison (Wis.) Capital Times, February 7, 1968.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Dickey Chapelle lived for journalism. For her, it was an all-consuming activity, commanding her complete energy and attention. She had virtually no outside interests. As she was fond of saying, "Being a lady correspondent is like being a lady wrestler, you can be one of them at a time, but not both simultaneously."[1]

Miss Chapelle spent her considerable talents in pursuit of certain personal and professional goals. Whether or not she was a woman hag-ridden with some dark compulsion to prove that she was as good as any male journalist alive, is difficult to say.

While she took great personal risks and subjected herself to unusual physical punishment in pursuit of a story, the events and the fact that she worked under the dual handicaps imposed by her sex and "free lance" status go a long way toward explaining her motivation. Her job was to write feature material, usually for magazine publication. Her subjects were people. Her forté was human interest. She offered her skills to whichever publication hired her, and to its readers.

A letter to the Indian government's Ministry of Defence in December 1962, requesting support, specified the limitations and requirements under which she worked as a periodical-publication correspondent. It is useful because it summarizes Miss Chapelle's personal approach to her profession. It read:

> My orders are to try to tell 85 million people about India's new army as I see it on actual duty facing the Chinese. . . . The Digest cannot publish material gathered in a few hours in the company of reporters whose publications are (a) able to print months in advance of the Digest and (b) for a much lesser audience than the Digest. But, the Digest would like to publish (after censorship) extensive eyewitness material and thoughtful analysis based on observation. In short, because this is potentially a big story, it will involve a big inconvenience. Such inconvenience has been undertaken on other similar researches of mine elsewhere simply because the story has been considered potentially useful to the governments concerned.[2]

This propensity for inconvenience or hardship may have been a passport to her own unusual brand of reporting. An especially close friend, Major General Edward G. Lansdale,* until 1960 the late President Diem's closest American confidante in Vietnam, and prior to that, top advisor on guerrilla warfare to the late Filipino president, Ramon Magsaysay, in a letter to the author, discussed that aspect of Miss Chapelle's career from personal knowledge:

> Dickey knew the facts of life about men in combat as no other woman I've met. Yet, despite the hardening

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*Since 1965, General Lansdale has served as assistant to the U. S. Ambassador in Saigon, South Vietnam.

> such experience brings to anyone, she remained the true lady. This is not simply a male judgment. My wife and others with strict feminine instincts were of the same opinion. I note this because Dickey often was in a spot where no lady should be. . . . When I returned to Viet-Nam in mid-1965, Dickey wanted to join in on the effort. She took me to meet her boss at the National Observer, to help convince him to send her to Viet-Nam. She was expected to cover the pacification effort, which was just being regenerated. When she arrived in Viet-Nam, she decided to get in just one more time of being with the USMC in combat, before commencing the pacification assignment. She left her extra baggage with my team and took off for Danang--and the mine that killed her--without telling me. This was typical of Dickey, when she was going to stick her neck 'way out. The last time it happened was after I had warned her about selecting her company among Cuban raiders. She simply hid out for a time. The next I heard was when the U. S. Navy fished her out of the briny, badly hurt from the fire, explosion, and sinking of the boat of some Cuban adventurers en route to a raiding attack. She hadn't wanted me to stop her, thus the silence.
>
> Dickey lived and did close-up reporting in an era of conventional wars such as WWII and Korea, as well as "national liberations" or "people's wars." She may well have seen more of them than any other single reporter, since she was adept at getting into the remotest hot-spots, by parachute or her wits. . . . She was one of the rare breed.[3]

Another friend, Leo Cherne, Director of the Research Institute of America, in offering his condolences when Dickey Chapelle was killed, explained how those who were closest to the reporter accepted the inevitable: "We were all, I'm afraid, quite helpless in imposing prudence on Dickey. She, of course, had a right to carve out her life her particular way, and we can only admire the courage, the consistency, the utter tenacity with which she pursued her professional career."[4]

Conclusions

Standards for judging great reporters and great reporting are as diverse as the people consulted. Some authors have stressed as essential such traits as perception, an interrogative state of mind, stamina, and the willingness to take risks.[5] Others, such as Rudyard Kipling, half in jest, have identified certain unique characteristics, among them "the power of glib speech that neither man nor woman can resist when a meal or a bed is in question, the eye of a horse coper, the skill of a cook, the constitution of a bullock, the digestion of an ostrich, and an infinite adaptability to all circumstances."[6]

Still another noted journalist and editor, Erwin D. Canham, has called accuracy the most essential obligation of reporting; and has specified a need for literary quality as a necessity for "staying power."[7]

To apply an arbitrary set of standards to Dickey Chapelle's performance, seems unnecessarily burdensome at this point. Her peers have testified convincingly as to her high professionalism. Further, this study has reinforced that impression. It seems sufficient to say that Miss Chapelle possessed these and many other qualities which might be regarded as hallmarks of exceptional journalistic achievement including: reporting in-depth; a fine regard for characterization, situation, and context;

and acute intuition, all sharpened by a keen eye for detail.

On the other side of the coin, the question of her objectivity requires additional scrutiny. The study has shown that Miss Chapelle recognized her inability to remain objective when covering certain events or controversies. Obviously, she had made a strong commitment to the U. S. military. Her treatment of the military in print and in photos invariably was favorable. Her criticism of press policy in later years was directed principally at higher echelons of responsibility in non-military government agencies. Generally, her military writing reflected more balance and less dogmatism than positions taken during her lecture tours. Perhaps this is attributable to her personality, or the fact that as a lecturer she spoke only for herself.

The questionnaire used in the study unanimously affirmed two interesting personality traits which are central to the biography. Dickey Chapelle's colleagues "definitely agreed" that as a professional journalist she was "realistic" and "not naive." Further, they identified among her greatest assets: experience, and an extensive knowledge of military affairs. Their response to the question of her reputation among correspondents repeatedly stressed the respect, admiration, and generally high repute in which she was held.

The consensus of respondents, while admittedly small in number, was that Dickey Chapelle was a highly professional photo-journalist and an impartial reporter except where the U. S. military was concerned. A slight majority considered her reporting on the military as "prejudiced in favor." However, the evidence has led the author to conclude that Miss Chapelle was far from "managed" by the military. Certainly, she was influenced as a result of the many years and many experiences shared with military men, especially in combat. She was basically friendly toward the military. She frequently identified with the military in dress, mannerisms, speech, and point of view. But she was too intelligent and too experienced to be taken-in by the military information system. She recognized it for what it is. She was well aware that the military had facilitated her becoming a correspondent and had advanced her career. Consequently, she was inclined to return the favor; but not at the expense of her professional integrity.

In view of her style of reporting which featured eye-witness accounts (sometimes, as in revolutions, gathered from both sides of the "front line"), if she wrote it, she believed it, because she saw it happen.

The need for objectivity beyond a given point in reporting has been questioned by some. This issue was

discussed previously in the study.* Dickey Chapelle defended herself adequately on this count in the letter cited in Chapter II. The author agrees with those who maintain that she was basically an objective reporter. Certainly, she fulfilled the minimum requirement for objectivity in that she approached her assignments with an open mind. Her commitment to the military, while possibly excessive, probably was not based on any motive of self-aggrandizement. The pressures from the military on a military writer are strong and constant, particularly on a "free lancer." It is probably the extraordinary reporter who does not bend under them, either toward or away from the source.

Finally, the study repeatedly has stressed the strong inclination toward identification which Miss Chapelle displayed for "causes" and people under stress. While this and other characteristic traits mentioned above label her an emotional reporter, in Dickey Chapelle they also represent the desirable attributes of a spirited and exciting writer.

A Reporter's Epitaph

It has been said that no occupation has a higher public service to perform than to serve man's need to know.[3]

---

*See Chapter III, pp. 61-62.

Such a goal was in keeping with the best traditions of journalism as practiced by Dickey Chapelle.

The deep personal pride and sense of purpose characteristic of true professionalism is sharply evident from the following passage.

The setting was Vietnam. The words were Dickey Chapelle's.

> I button my pocket flaps, fasten my web belt. As I do so, the question rises in my mind once again: What am I doing here?
>
> And another question: How can it be that in this nuclear age, with all the disarmament negotiations, all the arts of modern diplomacy, and all the world's will for peace, the real course of history is still being written by strong young men betting their lives at hide and seek on foot in darkness?
>
> I check my canteen (full), my cameras (loaded), my bootlaces (square knotted). I try to walk erect out into the courtyard to take my place in the operation.[9]

A fitting epitaph for a foreign correspondent.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1]Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Colonel USMC(Ret.), Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations (Annapolis, Maryland: U. S. Naval Institute, 1966), p. 355.

[2]Letter to Mr. Lall, Indian Minister of Defence, December 18, 1962, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 6.

[3]Letter from E. G. Lansdale, Major General USAF(Ret.) to the author, April 22, 1968.

[4]Letter from Mr. Leo Cherne to Tony Chapelle, November 5, 1965, in the Chapelle Papers, Box 7.

[5]L. L. Snyder and R. B. Morris (eds.), A Treasury of Great Reporting (2nd ed.; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. xxv-xxvi.

[6]Ibid., p. xxvii.

[7]Ibid., p. xxix.

[8]Wilbur Schramm, Responsibility in Mass Communications (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 344.

[9]"What's A Woman Doing Here?" A Reader's Digest Book Section (Pleasantville, N. Y.: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1962), p. 25.

APPENDIX

April 1, 1968

Dear Correspondent:

The attached questionnaire is designed to give an insight into Dickey Chapelle's character and personality, and to serve as a means of determining her impact as a professional journalist.

It, together with a study of her private papers, will provide essential source material for a biographical master's degree thesis now being prepared by me at the University of Wisconsin.

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Frederick R. Ellis
Commander, U. S. Navy

School of Journalism
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CORRESPONDENTS ABOUT DICKEY CHAPELLE

1. How well did you know Dickey Chapelle?

   (a) How long?

   (b) When?

   (c) Under what conditions?

2. With regard to personality she was: (check the appropriate blocks)

Quality	Probably Agree	Definitely Agree	Probably Disagree	Definitely Disagree
Intelligent				
Witty				
Cynical				
Emotional				
Warm				
Sincere				
Opinionated				
Vain				
Selfish				
Egotistical				
Humble				
Exhibitionistic				
Callous				
Aloof				
Vivacious				
Brash				
Moody				
Considerate				
Coarse				
Fatalistic				
Unpredictable				

3. As a photographer she was: (check one)

Highly professional ☐ Average professionally ☐

Below average professionally ☐

4. As a journalist she was: (check one)

Highly professional ☐ Average professionally ☐

Below average professionally ☐

5. With regard to professionalism, she was: (check the appropriate blocks)

Quality	Probably Agree	Definitely Agree	Probably Disagree	Definitely Disagree
Resourceful				
Ruthless				
Courageous				
Dedicated				
Ambitious				
Impressionable				
Naive				
Shallow				
Realistic				
Impartial				
Expert				
Thorough				
Colorful				
Impulsive				
Confident				
Industrious				
Dynamic				
Individualistic				

6. Compared with female correspondents (such as Marguerite Higgins, Margaret Bourke-White, Becky West, etc.) I rate her: (check one)

Superior ☐ Equal ☐ Subordinate ☐

7. As a foreign correspondent I consider her reporting on the military as having been: (check one)

Impartial ☐ Prejudiced in favor ☐

Prejudiced against ☐

8. What were her greatest assets?

9. What were her greatest shortcomings?

10. Briefly describe her reputation among correspondents.

11. Briefly describe her impact as a correspondent.

12. What was your reaction to her death?

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

NOTE: The information provided will be handled with discretion. No respondent will be quoted by name. You need not sign this questionnaire if you prefer not to.

Please attach any anecdotes relating to Dickey Chapelle that exemplify her personality or professional qualities.

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